

Vol 48



# Sea Swallow

Annual Report of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society



1999

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Yellow Nosed Albatross *Thalassarche chlororhynchos* off Inaccessible Island. Photo: Surg Captain D Dalglish.

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For details of Local Representatives and other useful addresses, see inside back cover.

*Subscription rates:* Full and associate members £8 (£7 if covenanted) annually. Due 1 January.

*Library rates:* Cost of *Sea Swallow* (£8) plus postage.

*Membership:* has been widened from the RN to include those, regardless of nationality, who share a common background of the sea.

*Aims and activities:* The primary aim of the Society is to promote a forum for the exchange of information on seabirds, and of landbirds at sea by members for whom birdwatching is a spare time recreation and hobby. The secondary aim is to co-ordinate the efforts of individual members using standardised recording methods so that observations can be of value to the professional ornithologist ashore. In addition to the promotion of observations afloat, the RNBWS organises fieldwork and expeditions, usually in cooperation with the Army and RAF Ornithological Societies.

*RNBWS Record Forms:* Standardised forms for recording Seabirds and Landbirds at sea, Seabird Census sheets and Birds examined in the Hand (BEH) forms have been designed for use at sea. Stocks are held by Warrant Officer C A R Bailey, 8 Grange Close, Gosport, Hants PO12 3DX (Tel 01705 526264). Please give detailed requirements and enclose a large (A4) stamped and self addressed envelope.

*Completed Record Forms* (both Seabirds and Landbirds) should be sent to the Editor of *Sea Swallow*.

*Material for publication in *Sea Swallow** should be sent to the Editor. Instructions to authors can be found on inside back cover.

An application form for membership is on 62 page of this edition of *Sea Swallow*.



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## **PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD**

What lies ahead for us in 2000 and beyond? Enclosed with this edition of *Sea Swallow* you will find details of *The Millennium Bird Count* project which was launched by the President of the Army Ornithological Society, and which has been endorsed by RAFOS and RNBWS. I commend it to you as an undertaking which is entirely consistent with the achievements of our membership in the second half of the 20th century, and which offers a good launching-pad for the next chapter in our story.

As you will see, there are opportunities for us all to contribute, whether sea-going or not, whether able to travel overseas or confined to UK; there is encouragement for those stationed abroad, or visiting in ships, to make contact with local bird groups. Above all the count should promote our core activity of observation from ships and craft, especially as we transit ill-frequented areas. On this front, some records have been received from the Pacific legs of the Tri-Service Transglobe Yacht Race which will finish in spring 2000.

The Chairman is arranging for details of *The Millennium Bird Count* to be published in a Fleet Temporary Memorandum. Why not make a special effort this year to catch the interest of your colleagues and to introduce them to the rewards which come from a closer interest in the world about us? There is much else to tempt them, including the expedition opportunities shared by our three service birdwatching societies. The main event of 2000 will be the Danube Delta survey work in November/December. I look forward to reports in *Sea Swallow* to match the quality and variety evident in this 48th edition.

**DAVID DOBSON** President

## **CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD**

First, may I join the President in thanking all of you who have contributed to RNBWS to date, and encourage you to take part in the exciting opportunities in the year 2000. At the brink of the new millennium, however, my major theme is a personal challenge to you. What is the future of RNBWS, and do you care enough to help to shape it?

Your committee is already thinking through some major issues. Last year I welcomed closer liaison with the Army and RAF Ornithological Societies. Although the proposal is not at present on the table, should we be moving ultimately to a Joint Service Ornithological Society? For the beleaguered officers of the three separate societies there are attractions. Despite repeated appeals from me, RNBWS has been unable to continue the policy of sharing out the administrative workload, which is bearing heavily on your small Executive Committee. We need a new Honorary Treasurer now that Lt Cdr Gary Lewis has taken on the demanding role of Journal Editor. Meanwhile, Col Peter Smith has held the lynchpin post of Honorary Secretary since 1985, and, very reasonably, is looking for a relief.

Some of you will be aware of another issue which we are asked to consider. AOS, RAFOS and RNBWS Editors have discussed the concept of moving to a high quality Tri-Service Journal in the new millennium. So far, your committee have indicated that we would wish to continue to publish *Sea Swallow* because of its well-established reputation as the only global journal of record for amateur observers at sea, but that we would be willing to contribute land-based observations to a joint journal. However, it is clear that we could not afford both the cost of *Sea Swallow* and our share of production of a new journal. How long can we 'go it alone'? Should we join in whole-heartedly with the joint venture, perhaps exploring whether the UK Meteorological Office Journal *The Marine Observer* would welcome a larger Bird section in



which we could publish records from sea<sup>1</sup>?

While I do welcome opportunities to share resources and to work on a joint basis where appropriate, I am a strong believer in RNBWS's unique identity, which is reflected in the international seafaring Membership and professional Associate Membership which has grown up around the original RN/RM core. But unless we get some new volunteers for office, and to assist in data-basing and other tasks, it may become impossible to sustain our vision and important role.

We will be addressing some of these issues at the AGM on 3 December. Please make a special effort to attend - last year our numbers fell to a record low. If duties, and hopefully voyages, prevent you, please do write to me in advance with your views. Never have we needed the enthusiastic participation of the membership more than now.

**MICHAEL BARRITT Chairman**

## **EDITORIAL**

In this my first year as Editor of *Sea Swallow*, I am conscious of the responsibility I have in taking forward nearly 50 years of production of the journal and of the enormous effort and dedication given by previous Editors. To this end I hope to be a worthy successor to Michael Casement and take this opportunity to thank him for his patience and expertise during the hand-over period. I thank him for acting as a post-box for the best part of a year; future articles and records should now be sent direct to me.

I have, with a few minor exceptions, retained the traditional layout of *Sea Swallow* and regular readers will note the usual seabird and landbird analyses. I make no excuse for the addition of, I believe, sympathetic advertising. The revenue this attracts cuts the cost of publication and, consequently, keeps the subscription rates unchanged. The absence of major articles this year is disappointing, but excellent papers from regular contributors make up for this. I am particularly grateful for Gabriel Banica's paper on the Birds of Histria and there is an opportunity to compare the Gulf trips of Colin Richardson and PO Steve Copsey.

The inclusion of a significant number of records from Stuart Hingston in the Caspian Sea is the foretaste of a wider analysis of this little recorded area in preparation for the next edition. Similarly, I would hope to have an update on the progress made by Stan Howe and his team in the computerisation of RNBWS records.

The number of seabird and landbird records received continues to decline and the lack of articles received makes the publication of an acceptable edition of *Sea Swallow* much more difficult to achieve and significantly less cost effective. I urge all members, particularly those lucky enough to be at sea, to make the effort to forward all their records; old records not yet submitted are still required as well. Get out those old notes and pass them to me.

I am keen that *Sea Swallow* continues to develop as we enter the new millenium, while at the same time retains the respect earned over the years. I am open to suggestions as to the way forward and would welcome members' views.

**GARY LEWIS Editor**

<sup>1</sup> RNBWS has assisted for many years with the identification of seabird reports in *The Marine Observer*, and the July 1999 issue contains an update of guidance for observers which was first produced by Capt Tuck in 1972.



# **Sea Swallow 48 (1999)**

## **OBSERVATIONS OF SEABIRDS**

**By Dr WRP Bourne**

While the number of observations has fallen again this year; they do include some large contributions, notably from Neil Cheshire covering oceanographic cruises off southern and eastern Australia, Nigel Milius from voyages to and from the Antarctic and (a new departure) SJ Hingston from an oilfield standby vessel in the central Caspian Sea, though we are only tabulating and commenting briefly on his observations this year (see table 1) (including what may be the first White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* for that sea) since there are more to come.

Observers (Number of sheets in brackets)

AB (SR) Peter Bainbridge, HMS *Bulldog* Plymouth to surveys off western Scotland, June, and in Irish Sea, October 1998 (5)

Captain NG Cheshire, MN RV *Franklin* six survey voyages Tasmania, March, Great Australian Bight March-April, Bass Strait June, Southern Ocean July, Tasman Sea November 1998, January-February 1999 (36 report sheets and meteorological data).

POWEM (R) Steve Copsey, HMS *York*, Suez-Persian Gulf-Manila-Tokyo-Singapore-Persian Gulf-Suez-Portsmouth March-October 1998 (12).

Messrs Stephen Hales and Derek Hallett, MV *Val de Loire*, return trip Plymouth-Santander, 14-16 October 1998 (8).

Chief Engineer Officer SJ Hingston, MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli*, observations in the Caspian Sea, 1997 (56).

Captain Thomas Johannsen, MV *Dorthe Oldendorff*, Singapore-Aqaba and return, January-February, Mexico November, Vancouver, Philippines, December 1998 (2).

Mr and Mrs IG Johnson, Return trip Portsmouth-Santurzi (Bilbao) 16-18 September 1998 (4).

Mr Nigel Milius, RRS *Bransfield*, Summary of observations during four voyages between the UK and Falklands, May and September 1992, October 1995 and April 1998 (17), with details for that between Antarctica-Falklands-Grimsby, March-May 1998 and between Antarctic and Falklands, March 1999 (27).

Mrs Judith Pentreath, ashore Goa India, February (1), Ketch *Salvation Jane*, Greece-Menorca June-July (4), Balearic Islands, September-October 1998 (2).

Mr Colin Richardson *et-al.* MS *Caledonian Star*, Muscat-Kuwait-Bahrain-Doha-Dubai-Muscat, December 1995 (2).

Transglobe 98, Leg 3, Yacht *Adventure, Racer*, HMS *Broadsword*, Honolulu-Hong Kong, March- April 1999 (6).

## **OBSERVATIONS**

Observers initials are given in ( ) distances in nautical miles (NM), depths in metres (M) and water temperatures in (°C). All dates are 1998 unless indicated otherwise.

### **PENGUINS *Spheniscidae***

**King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus***. Four ca. 46°S 56°W, 23 Oct 1995 (NM).

**Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis Papua***. Along the western Antarctic Peninsula NM saw one off Vernadsky in the Argentine Isles on 24 Mar, 40 off Signy Is on 28 Mar and two near 56.6°S 52.2°W on the way to the Falklands next day. In 1999 he saw up to 120 around the Palmer Archipelago three times between 13-21 Mar, 64 off Snow I on 22 Mar and four off King George I next day, and in both years up five off the Falklands (0.1-9.5°C)



**Adélie Penguin *Pygoscelis adeline*.** Six between Rothers on Adelaide I and Vernadsky in the Argentine Isles on 23 Mar '98, 50 off there next day, and two at 65.2°S 64.2°W off the Palmer Archipelago on 20 Mar '99 (0.3-1°C) (NM).

**Chintrap Penguin *Pygoscelis antarctica*.** At least 30 at 62.6°S 58.8°W on 25 Mar '98, 13 at 60.8°S 51.2°W next day, 110 off Signy I on 28 Mar, two off Snow I on 22 Mar '99, and 24 off King George I next day, (-0.3-1.8°C) (NM)

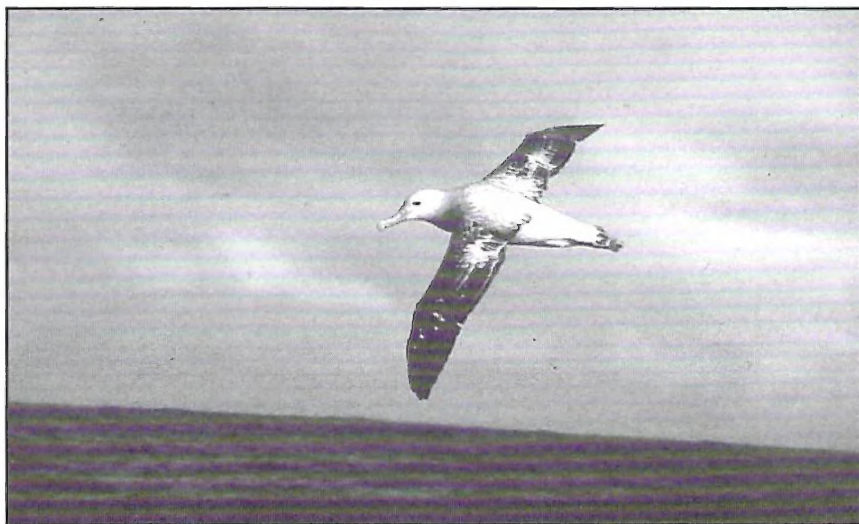
**Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor*.** Two and heard calling at 32.5°S 130.5°E 56nm off South Australia (65m) at 2240 hours on 2 Apr (NGC).

**Magellanic Penguin *Spheniscus magellanicus*.** Two at 33°S 51°W on 24 Oct '92, at least 35 at 35°S 51°W on 18 Oct '95, and 50+ at 35°S 55°W and 8 at 47°S 57°W on 31 Oct '92 along the eastern South American shelfbreak, and up to 114 around the Falklands (NM).

### **ALBATROSSES *Diomedidae***

Robertson and Nunn (1998) have recently proposed a revised classification and nomenclature recognising about twice as many species, usually involving recognised forms under different names though they sometimes retain the same name for more restricted entities. There are a number of reasons to question this (Bourne and Warham 1999) of which the most relevant to us is that some have never been adequately described, or in the case of the northern form of Buller's Albatross even named, and it is doubtful to what extent they can be recognised at sea.

**Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*.** Off South Australia NGC saw three at 37°S 137°E on 11 Aug, two at 38°S 139°E next day, and one at 41°S 136-7°E on 13 Aug (5000m, 10.5-14.8°C). In the Atlantic NM saw an immature at 27°S 40°W on 15 Oct '95, up to three between Montevideo, Stanley, and south to 62.2°S 58.0°W off King George I on 23 Mar '99, and west of the Falklands up to 10 at 52.7°S 57.4°W on 30 Mar '98, 20 at 51.2°S 55.9°W on 4 Apr '98, and 15 at 53.6°S 56.8°W on 25 Mar '99 (1.5-21°C).



Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans* Southern Ocean 37° 28'S 137° 30'E, 11 August 1998. Photo: Capt N Cheshire MN.

**Royal Albatross** *Diomedea epomophora*. NM saw up to 10 between Stanley and 42°S 57°W during 24-26 Apr '92, NGC one of the nominate race at 38°S 131°E on 9 Aug (12.8°C), and NM one at 53.6°S 56.8°W on 25 Mar '99, (7°C).

**Black-footed Albatross** *Phoebastria nigripes*. Up to three four times between 20.1°N 161.6°W and 18.1°N 152°E in Mar-Apr '99 (TG98).

**Laysan Albatross** *Phoebastria immutabilis*. Six 50nm south of Necker I Hawaii, on 15 Dec (TJ).

**Black-browed Albatross** *Thalassarche melanophris*. Up to nine between 32-38°S 140-130°E off South Australia (34-5550m, 11.5-20.7°C), on 11 occasions during the year, with 61 at 38°S 144°E (34-62m, 14.8°C) on 1 Jun, and two adults and two immatures of the form *impavida* at 38°S 141°E on the edge of the continental shelf (447m, 17.2°C), on 21 Mar (NGC); 21 adults and 6 immatures at ca 65°S around Adelaide Island in Mar '98 and '99, with increasing numbers north along the Antarctic on Peninsula on eight occasions to a maximum of 90 adults and 10 immatures at 60.8°S 51.2°W on 26 Mar, (-0.3-1.5°C), up to 100, mainly adult, on five occasions around the Falklands (7-9.5°C), and immatures north to ca 27°S in Mar-Apr (12-17+°C) (NM).

**Shy Albatross** *Thalassarche cauta*. Up to 12 between 32-4.3°S 130-140°E off South Australia eight times in Mar, Apr, Jun and Aug, with at least 30 at 38°S 140°E on the edge of the continental shelf on 21-22 Mar (15-5000m, 14.8-20.7°C) (NGC).

**Yellow-nosed Albatross** *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*. Up to three at least six times between 21-47°S 44-57.5°W in Apr (17-23°C) (NM), and up to 13 between 32-43°S 129-147°E off southern Australia 16 times in Mar, Apr, May, Jun and Aug, with 60 at 36°S 137°E on 24 Mar and 20 at 38°S 144°E on 1 Jun (15-5000m, 11.5-20.7°C) (NGC).

**Grey-headed Albatross** *Thalassarche chrysostoma*. Far off South Australia NGC saw four at 38°S 131°E on 9 Aug and two at 41°S 136-7°E on 13 Aug (5000-5555m, 10.5-12.8°C). In Mar '98 and '99 up to seven ten times from Adelaide Island north along the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula (-0.3-1.5°C) and three times west of the Falklands (7-9.5°C) (NM).



Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma*, South Ocean 41° 17'S 136° 49'E 13 August 1998. Photo: Capt N Cheshire MN.



**Buller's Albatross** *Thalassarche bulleri*. One at 43°S 147°E off Tasmania on 19 Mar (15-72m, 16.2°C) (NGC).

**Sooty Albatross** *Phoebastria fusca*. One at 33.1°S 46.3°W on 17 Oct '95, five at 47.2°S 53.5°W on 5 Apr '98 and 13 at 43.9°S 50.7°W next day (12-17°C) (NM), two at 37°S 137°E



**Sooty Albatross** *Phoebastria fusca*. South Ocean 37° 36'S 137° 20'E, 11 August 1998.

Photo: Capt N Cheshire MN.

on 11 Aug (5000m, 12.7-13.0°C) (NGC).

**Light-mantled Albatross** *Phoebastria palpebrata*. Four at 60.8°S 51.2°W on 26 Mar, two at 56.6°S 52.2°W on 29 Mar and one at 53.6°S 56.8°W on 25 Mar '99 (-0.3-7°C) (NM), one at 41°S 136-7°E on 13 Aug '98 (5000m, 10.5°C) (NGC).

#### **FULMARS** *Fulmarinae*

**Southern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes giganteus*. One at 41°S 136-7°E off South Australia on 13 Aug (5000m, 10.5°C) (NGC), three at 35°S 51°W off Uruguay on 18 Oct '95, and common south of Montevideo. In '98 and '99 13 times from 67.0°S 64.7°W off the Argentine Isles on 23 Mar north along the Antarctic Peninsula to a maximum of over 60 off Signy I on 28 Mar (0.1-1.5°C), and up to ten six times in Mar-Apr off the Falklands (3.4-9.5°C) (NM).

**Northern Giant Petrel** *Macronectes halli*. Single birds at 43°S 147°E off Tasmania on 19 Mar and 38°S 142°E off Victoria on 31 May (15-72m, 11.5-6.2°C) (NGC), three with red bill tips at 58.0°S 57.3°W on 24 Mar '99 and three at 53.6°S 56.8°W off the Falklands next day (5.8-7°C) (NM).

**Northern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*. The first northbound at 36.8°N 19.3°W north of Madeira on 27 Apr (17-18°C) and more regularly from 46.4°N 14.9°W on 30 Apr (12°C) with a maximum of 37 at 52.7°N 1.9°E off Grimsby on 3 May (9°C) (NM), up to 20 off west

Scotland in Jun (PB) two at 46-47°N 5°W and one at 47-48°N 5°W, 16 Sept and 26 in six hours around 48-49°N 5°W off Ushant on 16-17 Sept (IGJ).

**Southern Fulmar** *Fulmarus glacialis*. Last northbound in the Atlantic at 41°S 57°W on 24-26 Oct '92, first southbound at 42°S 57°W on 30 Oct '92 and 33°S 46°W on 17 Oct '95, ten at 53.6°S 56.8°W off the Falklands on 25 Mar '99, and up to 150 on 14 occasions along the Antarctic Peninsula south to 67.0°S 64.7°W in Mar '98 and '99 (-0.3-5.8°C) (NM).

**Antarctic Petrel** *Thalassoica antarctica*. Two at 67.8°S 69.2°W (1°C) off Adelaide I, on 18 Mar and one at 67.0°S 64.7°W on 23 Mar (-0.4-1°C) (NM).

**Cape Petrel** *Daption capense*. Seen south from 26.5°S in the South Atlantic in Oct. and north to 42°S on 24-26 Apr '92, one off the Falklands on 1 Apr '98 and 25 Mar '99 (7°C), up to 150 along the Antarctic Peninsula south to 67.8°S 69.2°W 11 times in Mar '98 and '99 (-0.3-1°C), maximum 500 at 60.3°S 46.9°W off Signy I on 28 Mar '98 (NM). Up to 11 five times between 38-41°S 131-139°E off South Australia from 31 Jul to 13 Aug '98 (5000m, 10.5-13°C) (NGC). **Snow Petrel** *Pagodroma nivea*. One at 60.3°S 46.9°W off Signy I on 28 Mar '98 (0.1°C) and 62.2°S 58.0°W off King George I on 23 Mar '99 (1.5°C) (NM).

**Kerguelen Petrel** *Lugensa brevirostris*. Ten south of the Falklands at 56.6°S 52.2°W (3.4°C) on 29 Mar, one at 52.7°S 57.4°W (9.5°C) off East Cove next day, 26 at 58.0°S 57.3°W (2.3-5.8°C) on 24 Mar '99 and nine at 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) next day (NM).

**Prions** *Pachyptila* sp. Off southern Australia 20 prions at 40°S 146°E (73m, 16.9°C) on 20 Mar '98, one at 38.7°S 138.0°E (5500m, 12.8°C) on 31 Jul two at 37°S 137°E (5000m, 12.7-3.0°C) on 11 Aug, and one at 41°S 136-7°E (5000m, 10.5°C) on 13 Aug (NGC). In the Atlantic sector up to 300 possible **Antarctic Prions** *P. desolata* four times between 56.6-60.8°S 47-57°W in Mar '98 and '99 (-0.3-5.8°C), up to 61 **Narrow-billed Prions** *P. belcheri* and at least one Antarctic Prion around the Falklands in Mar-Apr (7-9.5°C), and 185 possible **Broad-billed Prions** *P. vittata* between 33-34.5°S 46-51°W on 17-18 Oct '95, between 46°S 56°W and Stanley a week later, and between 47-40°S 54-48°W on 5-7 Apr '98 (12-19°C) (NM). Martuscelli *et al.* (1997) report there have been four wrecks of prions in Brazil in 1954, 1982, 1984 and 1996, the last after the passage north of a strong cold front. They were all immature, including 1,334 **Narrow-billed Prions** and 47 **Antarctic Prions** found between 23-25 Jul at two sites at about 24 1/2°S, with a few **Broad-billed Prions** and other birds north to a single Antarctic Prion at 0.8°S at the mouth of the Amazon.

**Fairy Prion** *Pachyptila turtur*. South of Australia NGC saw at least 1000 at 38°S 144°E (34-62m, 14.8-°C) on 1 Jun, and five at 41°S 136-7°E (5000m, 10.5°C) on 13 Aug.

**Blue Petrel** *Halobaena caerulea*. A possible bird at 60.3°S 46.9°W (0.1°C) on 28 Mar '98, nine at 58.0°S 57.3°W (2.3-5.8°C) on 24 Mar '99, and one at 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) next day (NM).

**Tahiti Petrel** *Pterodroma rostrata*. Off eastern Australia NGC saw four at 29°S 153°E (68-372m, 24.7-25.4°C) on 21 Jan '99, described as medium-sized blackish-brown petrels with a well-defined white lower breast and belly and a pale central stripe along the edge of the median underwing coverts.

**Great-winged Petrel** *Pterodroma macroptera*. Up to four seven times between 31-39°S 130-139°E (52-555m, 12.7-20°C) off South Australia in Mar, Apr, Jul and Aug '98, and single birds identified in the second case as a **Grey-faced Petrel** *Pm gouldi* at 30°S 153°E and 32°S 152°E (152-765m 27.0-26.4°C) off New South Wales on 23 and 31 Jan '99 (NGC).

**White-headed Petrel** *Pterodroma lessonii*. One at 37°S 137°E (5000m, 12.7-13.0°C) off South Australia on 11 Aug '98 (NGC), and at 52.9°S 56.4°W (7°C) east of the Falklands on



25 Mar '99 (NM).

**Atlantic Petrel** *Pterodroma incerta*. Up to 43 nine times between 47.2-23.5°S 43.5-37.7°W 5-12 Apr (12-28°C) (NM).

**Providence Petrel** *Pterodroma solandri*. One unusually far south at 38°S 149°E (369m, 17.2°C), and again an hour later, off Victoria on 6 Jun, described as a medium-large, mainly dark grey petrel, paler around the base of the bill with a distinctive white divided patch under the primaries (NGC).

**Murphy's Petrel** *Pterodroma ultima*. The regular occurrence of a bird at St Helena starting about Mar in the late 1980s (Rowlands *et-al* 1998) is further documented by Rowlands (1999).

**Fea's Petrel** *Pterodroma feae*. Two at 17°N 26°W off West Africa on 14 May '92, one at 13.5°N 20.5°W on 5 Oct '95, a possible bird at 8°N 24°W (28.5°C) on 20 Apr '98, and one at 19°N 21°W (22°C) on 23 Apr '98 (NM).

**Soft-plumaged Petrel** *Pterodroma mollis*. Up to 69 on ten occasions between 27-58°S 40-57°W in Oct and Mar-Apr '95-'99 (9-19°C) (NM).

**Cookilarias** - small *Pterodroma* sp. Large numbers at 14.8°N 168.1°E on 31 Jan 1999 (TG98).

**Bulwer's Petrel** *Bulweria bulwerii*. Up to 13 were seen eight times between 04°S-27.7-16.9°W off West Africa in Apr (17-29.5°C) (NM), and a group at 18.2°N 140.3°E in the NW Pacific on 10 Apr '99 (28°C) (TG98). Predated birds have recently been found on St Helena (Ashmole *et-al* 1999).

**Jouanin's Petrel** *Bulweria fallax*. Off Oman one at 25.1°N 57.0°E over the shelfbreak 35nm off Shinas on 1 Dec '95 and six at 23.8°N 58.4°E 12nm off Muscat on 17 Dec '95 (CR), and 40 along the coast on 20-22 Mar '98, one at 14.0°N 49.7°E on 5 Oct and ca 200 at 12.4°N 44.7-43.3°E off the southern Yemen next day (SC).

## **SHEARWATERS** *Procellariinae*

**Grey Petrel** *Procellaria cinerea*. Birds were seen off South Australia at 38.7°S 138.0°E (5500m, 12.8°C) on 31 Jul and following Long-finned Pilot Whales *Globicephala melaena* at 37°S 137°E (5000m, 12.7-13.0°C) on 11 Aug (NGC), and in the South Atlantic at 40.4°S 55.5°W on 22 Oct '95, with nine at 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) on 25 Mar '99 (NM).

**White-chinned and Spectacled Petrels** *Procellaria aequinoctialis* and *P. conspicillata*. It has long seemed possible that under a thousand pairs of *Procellarias* breeding on Inaccessible Island in the Tristan group of the South Atlantic deserve to be treated as a distinct species comparable to the subtropical New Zealand forms. Peter Ryan (1998) reports that in addition to their small size, early breeding season and distinctive white 'spectacles' they have a deeper voice than the White-chinned Petrel so this may be justified. Since they occur together at sea it seems more convenient to continue to list them together. In Oct '95 White-chinned Petrels were common from the Falklands north to 27°S 24°W in Oct '92, with a Spectacled Petrel at 34°S 48°W. Leaving Signy Id on 28 Mar '98 there were two White-chinned Petrels at 60.3°S 46.9°W (0.1°C), one at 56.6°S 52.2°W (3.4°C) next day, 16 at 52.7°S 57.4°W (9.5°C) off East Cove in the Falklands on 30 Mar, three on the way to Stanley on 1 Apr, 17 leaving Stanley (9°C) on 4 Apr, 13 at 47.2°S 53.5°W (12-15°C) next day, three dark *Procellarias* (1 *conspicillata*) at 43.9°S 50.7°W (17°C) on 6 Apr, five (4 *conspicillata*) at 40.1°S 48.1°W (18-19°C) next day, nine (7 *conspicillata*) at 37.2°S 49.6°W (18-19°C) on 8 Apr, eight (6 *conspicillata*) at 36.8°S 46.8°W (21°C) on 9 Apr, 11 (9 *conspicillata*) at 30.3°S 43.8°W (23°C) next day, and two *conspicillata* at 26.8°S 40.7°W (25-26°C) on 11 Apr. In 1999 there were ten White-chinned Petrels at 58.0°S 57.3°W (2.3-5.8°C) on 24 Mar, 13 at 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) next day, and one

off Stanley on 26 Mar (NM). There were four at 38°S 141°E (447m, 17.2°C) on the Victoria shelfbreak on 21 Mar '98 (NGC).

**Streaked Shearwater** *Calonectris leucomelas*. Thousands seen entering Tokyo Bay on 20 Jun and again heading for Mikura Shima Island when leaving at 1900 hours on the 24th (SC). **Cory's Shearwater** *Calonectris diomedea*. Northbound from the Falklands the first three near 39.4°S 48.8°W (18-19°C) on 7 Apr, six at 36.8°S 46.8°W (21°C) on 9 Apr, 37 at 30.3°S 43.8°W (23°C) next day, ten at 26.8°S 40.7°W (25-26°C) on 11 Apr, seven at 23.5°S 37.7°W (28°C) next day, at least three at 19.9°S 35.0°W (29°C) on 13 Apr, one at 00.4°S 26.1°W (29.5°C) on 18 Apr and 03.4°N 24.6°W (29°C) next day. A bird which could have been either a Cory's Shearwater or the Cape Verde form *D (c) edwardsi* seen at 07.0°N 24.2°W (28.5°C) on 20 Apr, with three more at 10.5°N 21.8°W (26°C) next day, a definite *edwardsi* at 15.1°N 21.4°W (23°C) on 22 Apr, and one of the Atlantic form *borealis* with a yellow bill and six *edwardsi* at 19.7°N 21.0°W (22°C) on 23 Apr, three Cory's at 23.7°N 21.5°W (22°C) on 24 Apr, one at 27.7°N 21.5°W (21°C) next day, seven at 40.3°N 16.9°W (19°C) on 26 Apr, nine at 36.5°N 19.6°W (17-18°C) on 27 Apr, ten at 40.3°N 16.9°W (15°C) next day and four at 43.2°N 16.5°W (13-14°C) on 29 Apr (NM), 21 at 47-48°N 5°W in the Bay of Biscay on 16 Sept and three at 44-45°N next day (IGJ), and one at 43°N CW on 15 Oct (SH and DH). Seen 27 times in the Mediterranean between 37-41°N 2.5-20.3°E (24-32°C) from Jun to Oct, usually small numbers but with 30 at 38.8°N 20.3°E off Cephalonia on 1 Jul, 52 at 38.1°N 15.6°E in the Strait of Messina on 4 Jul, and over 100 at 41.2°N 09.3°E, 187 at 41.1°N 8.7°E and over 250 at 40.8°N 07.6°E between Sardinia and the Balearic Isles on 18-20 Jul, where there were 40 at 39.5°N 02.5°E on 3 Oct (JP), also 300 at 38.8°N 10.5°E SE of Sardinia on 20 Oct (SC).

**Wedge-tailed Shearwater** *Puffinus pacificus*. In the Indian Ocean possibly some among at least 60 large dark shearwaters at 25.1°N 57.0°E on the shelfbreak 35 nm off Shinas in the Gulf of Oman on 1 Dec '95 (CR). Between the Malacca Strait and Japan SC reported eight pale birds at 06°N 108°E on 9 Jun, ten dark at 25.2°N 127.2°E on 15 Jun, one pale at 28.3°N 130.3°E next day, 15 dark between the ship and Terega-shima at 30.3°N 130.8°E on 17 Jun, five dark entering Nishinu-omote Harbour next day, and 40 pale at 23°N 123.7°E on 28 Jun (but it since most Wedgetails in these seas are apparently pale there has been some confusion with other migratory dark shearwaters). Off eastern Australia five at 33°S 151°E (73-94m, 20.0°C) and 3500 at 32°S 152°E 20.5°C) on 15 Nov, two at 29°S 153°E (68-372m 24.7-25.4°C) on 21 Nov, 49 at 30°S 153°E (152-765m, 37.0-26.4°C) on 23 Nov, 20 at 31°S 153°E (210m, 27.7°C) on 25 Nov, 153 at 32°S 152°E (72-150°C) on 29 Jan '99, 50 at 32°S 152°E (240.7°C) next day, and one at 30°S 153°E (52-68m, 26.6°C) on 1 Feb (NGC).

**Flesh-footed Shearwater** *Puffinus carneipes*. Some with long wings and pale bills and feet among the dark shearwaters at 25.1°N 57.0°E, over the shelf break 35 nm off Shinas in the Gulf of Oman on 1 Dec '95 (CR) and 100 possible birds in the distance at 01.4°N 81.9°E south of Sri Lanka on 25 Jul '98 (SC), ten at 38°S 140°E (150m, 17.1°C off South Australia on 22 Mar, two at 37°S 139°E (39m, 17.5°C) next day, five at 35°S 138°E (50m, 18.8°C and 50 at 36°S 137°E (97m, 18.5°C) on 24 Mar, four at 36°S 136°E (240-135m, 18.4°C) next day, 356 at 35°S 134°E (121-86m, 19.8-9.5°C) on 26 Mar, 350 at 34°S 132°E (500m, 20.7°C) on 28 Mar, 24 at 33°S 133°E (57-83m, 16.9-19.1°C) next day, one at 32°S 133°E (72-54m, 19.4-18.3°C) on 30 Mar, five at 33°S 131°E (117m, 20.7°C) next day, 31 at 32-33°S 131-0°E (94-196m, 20.7°C) on 1 Apr, 20 at 31°S 130°E (52-38m, 19.0°C) next day, four at 32°S 129°E (50m, 19.9-19.2°C) on 4 Apr, six at 34.8°S 136.2°E (35m, 19.8°C) on 6 Apr, one at 29°S 153°E (68-372m,



24.7- 25.4°C) off New South Wales on 21 Jan, and 90 at 32°S 152°E (72-150m 22.9-27.3°C) on 29 Jan (NGC).

**Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis*.** Travelling south NM met them at 11°N 26°W on 13 Oct '92 and 48°N 9°W on 25 Sept '95, with at least 300 at 36°S 56°W off Brazil on 21 Oct. Returning north seen close to Falklands in Apr, 100 at 32°S 51°W off Brazil on 1 May in '92, then to 3°N 31°W, and 29 at 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) off the Falklands on 25 Mar '99. Travelling north first 23 at 52.7°S 57.4°W (9.5°C) off East Cove in the Falklands on 30 Mar '98, 34 at 51.2°S 55.9°W (9°C) leaving Stanley on 4 Apr, 35 at 47.2°S 53.5°W (12-15°C) next day, twelve at 43.9°S 50.7°W (17°C) on 6 Apr, 30 at 40.1°S 48.1°W (18-19°C) next day, 17 at 37.2°S 49.6°W (18-19°C) on 8 Apr, three at 36.8°S 46.8°W (21°C) on 9 Apr, one at 30.3°S 43.8°W (23°C) on 10 Apr (NM). In the Bay of Biscay one at 45-46°N 5°W on 16 Sept 1041 at about 44-45°N 5°W off the north coast of Spain after a period of west winds, and then another at 43-44 5°W, on 17 Sept (TGC).

**Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*.** Twelve at 52.7°S 57.4°W (9.5°C) off the Falklands on 30 Mar, 125 between East Cove and Stanley on 1 Apr, and twelve at 51.2°S 55.9°W (9°C) leaving Stanley on 4 Apr, two at 07.0°N 24.2°W (28.5°C) on 20 Apr and 10.5°N 21.8°W (26°C) next day, three at 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) off the Falklands on 25 Mar '99 and 50 off Stanley next day, and in the NW Atlantic five at 49°N 9°W on 25 Sept '95 (NM), one at 47-48°N 5°W and two at 45-46°N 5°W on 16 Sept '98 and four at 49-50°N 3-5°W next day (IGJ), and one at 50°N 4°W on 14 Oct (SH and DH) Off South Australia one at 35°S 134°E (121-86m, 19.8°C) on 26 Mar (NGC).

**Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris*.** Off southern Australia NGC saw 2900 at 43°S 147°E (15-72m, 16.2°C) on 19 Mar, five at 40°S 146°E (73m, 16.9°C) next day, 35°S 134°E (121-86m 19.8°C) on 26 Mar and 34°S 132°E (500m, 20.7°W on 28 Mar, 302 at 33°S 133°E (57-83m, 16.9-19.1°C) on 29 Mar, 2010 at 32°S 133°E (72-54m, 19.4-18.3°C) on 30 Mar, two at 33°S 131°E (117m, 20.7°C) on 31 Mar and ten at 33°S 133°E (97m, 19.6°C) on 5 Apr, off eastern Australia five at 33°S 151°E (73-94m, 20.0°C) on 15 Nov and 20 at 31°S 152°E (90m, 20.9°C) on 19 Nov (NGC).

**Manx Shearwater *Puffinus Puffinus*.** Many off eastern South America in Oct, further north a possible bird at 19.7°N 21.0°W (22°C) on 23 Apr, one at 43.2°N 16.5°W (13-14°C) on 29 Apr, three at 46.4°N 14.9°W (12°C) on 30 Apr, 150 at ca 48.0°N 10.6°W (12°C) on 1 May, and seven at 49.9°N 2.7°W (11°C) next day (NM), one at 49-50°N 3-5°W on 17 Sept, four at 41-45°N 5°W and one at 43-44°N 5°W on 17 Sept (IGJ) and five at 48°N 5°W on 16 Oct (SH and DH).

**Levantine Shearwater *Puffinus yelkouan*.** Yésou and Paterson (1999) describe the ill-documented movement to treat this as a distinct species, confusingly often called the Yelkouan Shearwater when that name has been used for the next form as well and it already has a long-established English name of its own. Four were at 38.8°N 20.3°E off Cephalonia on 7 Jul and over 25 at 40.8°N 08.7°E off E Sardinia on 20 Jul (JP).

**Balearic Shearwater *Puffinus mauretanicus*.** In the Bay of Biscay one at 46-47°N 5°W on 16 Sept and two at 44-45°N 5°W next day (IGJ), and ten at 43°N 4°W on 15 Oct (SH & DH).

**Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*.** One off southern Australia at 43°S 147°E (15-72m, 16.2°C) on 19 Mar, two at 38°S 140°E (150m, 17.1°C) on 22 Mar, one at 35°S 138°E (50m, 18.8°C) on 24 Mar and three at 34.8°S 136.2°E (35m, 19.8°C) on 6 Apr (NGC).

**Hutton's Shearwater *Puffinus huttoni*.** Eight at 35°S 138°E (50m, 18.8°W off southern Australia on 24 Mar, described as having a direct flight with a fast wingbeat and being blackish

brown above and white below with a dusky side to the breast and the underwing dusky white with dark margins and axillaries, and 100 at 38°S 144°E (34-62m 14.8°C) on 1 Jun (NGC).

**Little Shearwater** *Puffinus assimilis*. Seen in the Atlantic at 19°N 20.5°W on 11 Oct '92 and 33.5°N 20.5°W on 30 Sept '95, with four in the South Atlantic at 46.8°S 53.5°W (12-15°C) on 5 Apr '98 (NM), and one at 37°S 137°E (5000m, 12.7-13.0°C) off South Australia on 11 Aug (NGC).

**Audubon's Shearwater** *Puffinus lherminieri*. Over 100 at 25.1°N 57.0°E on the shelf break 35 nm off Shinas, and one at 25.4°N 56.7°E, 12 nm off Khor Fakkan, in the Gulf of Oman on 1 Dec '95, one between Khasab and Umm al Fayarrin in the Strait of Hormuz on 16 Dec, and three at 23.8°N 58.4°E, 12 nm off Muscat, next day (CR), and 40 nearby at 23.9°N 58.5°E on 26 Sept '98 (SC).

**DIVING-PETRELS** *Pelecanoidinae*. Four probable **Common Diving-petrel** *Pelecanoides urinatrix* at 56.6°S 52.2°W (3.4°C) between Signy Id and the Falklands on 29 Mar, three at 52.7°S 57.4°W (9.5°C) approaching East Cove next day, two at 51.2°S 55.9°W (9°C) leaving Stanley on 4 Apr (NM), and one at 38°S 142°E (48-60m 11.5-12.1°C) off southern Australia on 31 May (NM). NM also thought a bird seen at 58.0°S 57.3°W (2.3-5.8°C) on 24 Mar '99 might be a **Magellanic Diving-petrel** *Pelecanoides magellanicus* because it had white scapulars, though this usually seems to be a more coastal species.

#### **STORM-PETRELS** *Hydrobatidae*

**Wilson's Storm-petrel** *Oceanites oceanicus*. Up to 70 seen 17 times between 52.7-67.8°S and 46.9-69.2°W (-0.3-3.4°C) in the Antarctic in Mar in '98 and '99. Sailing north 12 at 51.2°S 55.9°W (9°C) on 4 Apr '98, five at 47.2°S 53.5°W (12-15°C) on 5 Apr and 43.9°S 50.7°W (17°C) next day, one at 48.1°W (18-19°C) on 7 Apr, one at 37.2°S 49.6°W (18-19°C) on 8 Apr, and two at 36.8°S 46.8°W (21°C) on 9 Apr, also one at 7°N 29.5°W on 11 May '92 (NM). One at 38°S 131°E (5555m, 12.8°C) off southern Australia on 9 Aug '98 (NGC).

**Grey-backed Storm-petrel** *Garrodia nereis*. Ten at 52.7°S 57.4°W (9.5°C) south of the Falklands on 30 Mar, and on leaving 13 at 51.2°S 55.9°W (9°C) on 4 Apr and birds at 46.8°S 53.2°W and 47.8°S 54.0°W (12-15°C) next day (NM).

**White-faced Storm-petrel** *Pelagodroma marina*. One off West Africa at 23°N 20°W on 10 Oct '92 (NM), and off southern Australia two at 40°S 146°E (73m, 16.9°C) on 20 Mar '98 and 160 in moult at the shelfbreak at 32-33°S 130-131°E (94-196m, 20.7°C) on 1 Apr (NGC).

**White-bellied and Black-bellied Storm-petrels** *Fregetta grallaria* and *F. tropica*. In the south up to 57 eight times between 56.6-62.7°S and 46.9-61.2°W (-0.3-3.4°C) in Mar '98 and '99, and further north 14 between 26°S 39°W and 41°S 56°W during 15-22 Oct '95, one with one *F. grallaria* and one *Fregetta* sp at 40.1°S 48.1°W (18-19°C) on 7 Apr '98 (also three *Fregettas* at 47.2°S 53.5°W (12-15°C) on 5 Apr and two at 43.9°S 50.7°W (17°C) next day), and two *F. grallaria* at 46.6°S 57.2°W on 31 Oct '92 (NM).

**White-throated Storm-petrel** *Nesofregetta fuliginosa*. TG98 reported two Pacific Storm-petrels at 14.3°N 155°E on 6 Apr '99.

**British Storm-petrel** *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Storm Petrels reported off Western Europe at 48.5°N 6°W on 6 May '92 (NM) and 44-45°N 5°W on 17 Sept '98 (TGJ), and a British Storm-petrel at 37.8°N 17.3°E (27°C) in the Ionian Sea on 29 Jun '98 (JP).

**Madeiran Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma castro*. NM reported small numbers off West Africa between 11-32°N during his earlier voyages, most 14 at 2.4°N 31.2°W on 10 May '92. Sailing





White-faced Storm Petrel *Pelagodroma marina* on board rv Franklin at 38° 48'S 148° 24'E eastern Strait Australia, 10 September 1986. Photo: Capt N Cheshire MN.

north in '98 he saw a number of storm-petrels, and identified a bird with a white rump and unforked tail as this species at 10.5°N 21.8°W (26°C) on 21 Apr '98, another at 15.1°N 21.4°W (23°C) next day, one at 36.5°N 19.6°W (17-18°C) on 27 Apr '98 and three possible birds at 40.3°N 16.9°W (15°C) off Portugal on 28 Apr. Monteiro and Furness (1998) report distinct summer and winter-nesting populations in the Azores show minor differences, the most important being that the latter and their eggs are 10 per cent larger, and suggest they be treated as sibling species, but since there is much overlap in appearance this does not seem very practical.

**Leach's Storm-petrel** *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*. During the voyage discussed above two at 07.9°S 29.5°W (29°C) on 16 Apr, four at 04.0°S 27.7°W (29.5°C) next day, at least 14 at 00.4°S 26.1°W (29.5°C) on 18 Apr, six at 03.4°N 24.6°W (29°C) next day, seven at 07.0°N 24.2°W (28.5°C) on 20 Apr, two at 15.1°N 21.4°W (23°C) on 22 Apr and four at 23.7°N 21.5°W (22°C) on 24 Apr (NM). In the Bay of Biscay one at 43-44°N 5°W on 17 Sept (IGJ) and 49°N 4°W on 16 Oct (SH and DH) and one in the English Channel at 50°N 1°W on 3 Oct '92 (NM). Two reported at 21.3.99 20.1°N 161.6°W (28°C) off Hawaii (where Madeiran Storm-petrels are resident) on 21 Mar '99 (TG98).

#### **TROPICBIRDS *Phaethontidae***

**Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus*. Three off the Lesser Antilles at 16.9°N 55.9°E on 4 Oct (SC).

**Red-tailed Tropic-bird** *Phaethon rubricauda*. Two at in the Basilan Strait, Philippines, (27°C) on 21 Dec (TJ).

**Yellow-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus*. Le Corre and Jouventin (1999) have recently described a new small often yellow race *P l europae* from Europa Island in the Mozambique

Channel. Since tropical populations are often small and it is becoming clear that the yellow morph is also widespread, though usually rare away from the Indian Ocean Christmas Island it seems doubtful if this is justified. White birds were seen at 5°S 32.5°W on 17 Oct '92 and 1.2°S 26.4°W on 18 Apr '98 (NM), a yellow bird at 6.2°N 85.0°E (25°C) south of Sri Lanka on 13 Feb '99 (TJ) a white one off New South Wales at 31°S 153°E (177m, 27.2°C) on 25 Jan '99 following three cyclones in Coral Sea (NGC) and one or two birds on most days crossing the North Pacific between 18.3°N 168.4°W and 19.4°N 133.5°E (28-29°C) during 23 Mar-13 Apr '99 (TG98).

#### **GANNETS AND BOOBIES *Sulidae***

**Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*.** An immature at 38.8°N 01.4°E (23°C) off eastern Spain on 7 Oct (JP), three adults off Gibraltar on 17 Oct and others regularly to the UK, with 50 at 38.8°N 10.5°W off Portugal on 20 Oct (SC), 1240 in 270 minutes at 49-50°N 3-5°W in the mouth of the English Channel on 17 Sept (TGJ) and 1164 adults and 68 immatures in 380 minutes there on 14 and 16 Oct (SH and DH). These, NM and PB also saw smaller numbers off NW Europe between 43-60°N and 1.9°E- 14.9°W (9-12°C) on 24 occasions.

**Australasian Gannet *Morus serrator*.** Six off southern Australia at 43°S 147°E (15-72m, 16.2°C) on 19 Mar, two at 38°S 140°E (150m, 17.1°C) on 24 Mar, 12 adults and six immatures at 35-6°S 137-138°E (50-97m, 18.8°C) on 24 Mar, six at 31°S 130°E (52-38m, 19.0°C) on 2 Apr, an immature at 32°S 129°E (50m, 19.9-19.2°C) on 4 Apr, 60 adults at 34.8°S 136.2°E (35m, 19.8°C) on 6 Apr, five at 38°S 142°E (48-60m, 11.5-12.1°C) on 31 May, and three at 38°S 144°E (34-62m, 14.8°C) on 1 Jun, and off eastern Australia nine subadults at 32°S 152°E (94m, 20.5°C) on 15 Nov and one immature at 32°S 152°E (72-150m, 22.9-27.3°C) on 29 Jan '99 (NGC).

**Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*.** Birds in the Atlantic at 2°S 31.5°W on 16 Oct and elsewhere around Fernando de Noronha in '92, though sailing further east only three at 19.5°S 35°W on 13 Oct in '95 and none in '98 (NM). In the Arabian Sea 30 over dolphins at 16.2°N 54.5°E on 20 Mar, and 18 immatures and an adult at 16.9°N 55.9°E on 4 Oct, and in the NE Pacific he saw one at 28.3°N 130.3°E on 16 Jun (SC). Two off Malacca (27°C) on 4 Feb '99 (TJ).



Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) from HMS Endurance on passage through Cape Verde Islands, November 1997. Photo Commanding Officer HMS Endurance.



**Nazca Booby *Sula (dactylatra) granti*.** Pitman and Jehl (1998) report that orange-billed, cliff-nesting boobies breeding on islands off western tropical America and feeding over the cool waters to the east overlap with the flat-ground-nesting yellow-billed local race of Masked Booby *S. d. personata* feeding over warmer water to the west, and suggest that they be treated as separate species, whose classification and distribution are also discussed by Roberson (1998).

Since the colour of the bare parts of Masked Boobies also varies elsewhere (Rowlands *et al* 1998) it would be useful to have more information about it.

**Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*.** In the S Atlantic 11 at 22°S 4.1°W on 4 May, single birds at 1.5°S 31°W on 16 Oct '92, 5°S 33°W next day, 18°S on 20 Oct, 42 off C Frio Brazil, on 21 Oct, and one at 28.3°S 27.2°W on 23 Oct (NM). Birds seen in the N Pacific at 18.3°N 168.4°W, 192.2°N 131.3°E, and 17.0°N 143.0°E (29°C) between 23 Mar and 9 Apr '99 (TG98).

**Red-footed Booby *Sula sula*.** In the tropical Atlantic one at 2°S 31.5°W on 16 Oct '92 (NM), and in '99 one off Malacca (27°C) on 4 Feb (TJ) and four at 20.1°N 161°W (28°C) on 21 Mar, a white bird at 16.1°N 175.4°W (30°C) on 25 Mar, a white bird with the head and tail brown between 14.9°-14.2°N 177.5°-175.1°E (30-30°C) on 28 Mar, and several white birds at 14.8°N 168.1°E next day (TG98).

#### **CORMORANTS AND SHAGS *Phalacrocoracidae***

**Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*.** One in the Channel approaches at 49°W on 14 Oct (SH and DH) and off Sardinia at 40.8°N 09.8°E and 41.1°N 08.7°E on 16 and 18 Jul, and two at 40.8°N 07.6°E (all 24°C) on 22 Jul (JP). In the Persian/Arabian Gulf 15 off Failaka Island and dozens in the Channel approaching Kuwait on 10 Dec '95 (CR) and an immature when anchored off northern Bahrain at 26.6°N 50.9°E on 8 Apr '98 (SC).

**Antarctic Shag *Leucocarbo (atriceps) bransfieldensis*.** In the Antarctic 60 between Rothera, Adelaide Is and Vernadsky, Argentine Is 67.0°S 64.7°W (-0.4°C) on 23 Mar and four leaving Signy Island (0.1°C) on 28 Mar, and in '99 two at 65.1°S 64.0°W (1°C) leaving Lockroy through Lemaire Channel on 13 Mar, three around Adelaide Is (1°C) next day, 13 leaving Rothera on 18 Mar, 11 at 65.2°S 64.2°W (1°) on 20 Mar, ten at 62.7°S 61.2°W (1.8°C) anchored off Snow Id on 22 Mar, and five off King George Id (1.5°C) next day (NM).

**Imperial Shag *Leucocarbo atriceps*.** Three approaching East Cove in the Falklands on 30 Mar, 100 between East Cove and Stanley on 1 Apr, and six leaving Stanley on 4 Apr, and again off Stanley on 26 Mar '99 (NM).

**Socotra Shag *Leucocarbo nigrogularis*.** Around southern Arabia 54 five miles north of Diba-Bayah, Oman, on 1 Dec '95, c 600 from Bahrain on 11 Dec, c 800 from the King Fahd causeway leaving Bahrain next day, and c 2000 at Khasab, N Oman, on 15 Dec (CR), 100 four miles north of Dubai on 3-4 Apr '98, five off Doha Harbour on 16 Apr, 8 leaving it on 20 Apr 8 immatures approaching Abu Dhabi on 29 Aug, and 18 adults and immatures leaving it on 1 Sept (SC).

**European Shag *Stictocarbo aristotelis*.** Off the Balearic Islands eight were seen at 40.0°N 04.3°E (32°C) on 11 Sept, birds at 40.0°N 03.9°E and 39.9°N 03.7°E on 16 and 18 Sept, seven at 39.7°N 02.5°E on 23 Sept, and five at 39.4°N 02.7°E on 28 Sept (all 26°C) (JP).

#### **FRIGATEBIRDS *Fregatidae***

In the North Pacific an unidentified frigate was seen at 20.1°N 161.6°W (28°W on 21 Mar '99,

an immature **Great Frigatebird** *Fregata minor* at 14.8°N 168°E on 31 Mar, and a **Lesser Frigatebird** *Fregata ariel* at 16°N 169°E on 1 Apr (TG98).

#### **PHALAROPES** *Phalaropodidae*

**Red Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius*. Four in summer plumage at 41.1°N 16.3°W off Portugal on 28 Apr (NM), and it seems likely two unidentified phalaropes seen by TGC at 43-44°N 5°W on 17 Sep were also this species.

**Red-necked Phalarope** *Phalaropus lobatus*. In the Gulf of Oman 35 at 25.1°N 57.0°E on the shelbreak 35nm off Shinas, 50 at 25.4°N 56.7°E, 12nm off Khor Fakkan, on 1 Dec '95, and 13 at 23.8°N 58.4°E 12nm off Muscat on 13 Dec (CR).

#### **SHEATHBILLS** *Chionidae*

**Yellow-billed Sheathbill** *Chionis alba*. One on board at 40.6°S 57.2°W off Argentina on 31 Oct '92, two off Signy Island (0.1°C) on 28 Mar '98, and one at 64.6°S 63.2°W (1°C) leaving Palmer Station on 21 Mar '99 (NM).

#### **SKUAS AND JAEGERES** *Stercorariinae*

**Great Skua** *Catharacta skua*. In the tropical Atlantic two at 6.1°N 27.9°W on 14 Oct '92, one off West Africa at 36.5°N 19.6°W (17-18°C) on 27 Apr '98 and three at 48.4°N 9.5°W (12°C) in the Western Approaches on 1 May (NM), where they were seen regularly between the UK and N Spain, TGJ with a maximum of 128 in 270 minutes at 49-50°N 3-5°W on 17 Sep, and SH and DH 32 in 380 minutes here on 14-16 Oct.

**Southern Skua** *Catharacta antarctica*. First seen off Montevideo on 30 Apr '92, with up to 12 around the Falklands, 19 at 62.6°S 58.8°W (0.5°C) off the South Shetlands on 25 Mar '98, one at 60.8°S 51.2°W (-0.3°C) next day, next day, seven around Signy Island (0.1°C) on 28 Mar, one at 56.6°S 52.2°W (3.4°C) on 29 Mar, 11 at East Cove (9.5°C) next day, three on the way to Stanley on 1 Apr, six leaving Stanley on 4 Apr, three at 47.2°S 53.5°W (12-15°C) on 5 Apr, one at 43.9°S 50.7°W (17°C) next day, and two at 40.1°S 48.1°W (18-19°C) on 7 Apr, one at 66.7°S 66.7°W (1°C) on 19 Mar '99 (described as longer and heavier than McCormick's Skua with a dark nape), four off King George Island (1.5°C) on 23 Mar, and three at 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) on 25 Mar (NM). Off southern Australia one at 32°S 133°E (72-54m, 19.4-18.3°C) on 30 Mar '98 and 38°S 142°E (48-60m, 11.5-12.1°C) next day, and 38°S 144°E (34-62m 14.8°C) on 1 Apr (NGC).

**McCormick's Skua** *Catharacta maccormicki*. In the South Atlantic one at 183°S 38.5°W on 5 May '92, two at 10°S 35°W on 7 May, four at 1.5°S 32.5°W on 9 May, two at 15.4°S 33.4°W on 12 Oct, one at 27.5°S 40.5°W on 15 Oct '95, and two at 36°S 55.5°W on 21 Oct. Further south the 50 (some pale) at 67.0°S 64.7°W (-0.4°C) between Rothera, Adelaide Is and Vernadsky, Argentine Is on 23 Mar '98, 38 leaving the latter next day, three at 62.6°S 58.8°W (0.5°W on 25 Mar, 32 with pale napes and uniform backs and eight skua sp. at 65.1°S 64.0°W (1°C) leaving Lockroy through the Lemaire Channel on 13 Mar '99, 12 around the Adelaide Is (1°C) on 14 Mar, 22 with eight skua sp. at 67.8°S 69.2°W (1°C) when leaving Rothera on 18 Mar, 12 at 65.7°S 66.7°W (1°C) on 19 Mar, 82 at 65.2°S 64.2°W (1°C) on 20 Mar, 13 at 64.6°S 63.2°W (1°C) leaving Palmer Station on 21 Mar, seven at 62.7°S 61.2°W (1.8°C) off Snow Island on 22 Mar. 13 off King George Island (1.5°C) on 23 Mar, and single birds at 58.0°S 57.3°W (2.3-5.8°C) and 53.6°S 56.8°W (7°C) on 24 and 25 Mar (NM).

**Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*. In the Atlantic summer adults at 9°S 34°W on 18



Oct '92 and at 22.7°N 21.3°W (22°C) on 24 Apr '98, two at 39.9°N 17.2°W (15°C) on 28 Apr and 38.4°N 9.5°W (12°C) on 1 May (NM). In the Arabian area three five miles north of Diba-Bayah, Oman, on 1 Dec '95, one off Failaka Id on way to Kuwait on 10 Dec, nine near Sir Abu Nu'air Island on 14 Dec '95 and one in the Straits Hormuz on 16 Dec (CR), and birds at 29.1°N 48.8°E on 4 May '98, 29.5°N 49.2°E (tail seen) next day, leaving Abu Dhabi on 1 Sept, at 26.6°N 51.2°E on 21 Sep, and entering Muscat on 29 Sept (SC). Off southern Australia two at 32°S 152°E (94m, 20.5°C) on 15 Nov, and off eastern Australia one at 32°S 152°E (72-150m, 29.9-27.3°C) on 29 Jan '99 and 32°S 152°E (210m 27.0°C) on 31 Jan, and two at 30°S 153°E (52-68m 26.6°C) next day (NGC).

**Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*.** One (with an interrupted breast band and projecting tail) at 50.2°S 56.0°W off the Falklands on 4 Apr, a dark bird at 44.1°S 50.8°W (17°C) on 6 Apr, pale and dark birds at 48.4°N 9.5°W (12°C) in the Western Approaches on 1 May and a dark one at 52.7°N 1.9°E (9°C) on 3 May (NM), one at 59.6°N 05.8°W off the Hebrides on 12 Jul (PB), at least three at 49-50°N 3-5°W in the Channel approaches on 17 Sep (IGC), and birds at 49°N 4°W and 48°N 5°W there on 14-16 Oct (SH & DH). Three at 26.6°N 50.9°E off Bahrain on 12 Apr (SC).

**Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicauda*.** Birds in the Atlantic at 2°N 31.5°W on 10 May '92, 32°S 51°W on 24 Oct '92 and 24°N 21°W on 3 Oct '95 (also three unidentifiable small skuas at 36.8°S 46.8°W (21°C) on 9 Apr '98 and 03.4°N 26.4°W (29°C) on 19 Apr) (NM).

#### **GULLS *Larinae***

**Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*.** Ten at 41.2°N 09.3°E off Sardinia (24°C) on 18 Jul, and two at 40.0°N 04.2°E (24°C) on 14 Sep, 39.4°N 92.7°E (26°C) on 28 Sep, and 38.8°N 01.4°E (24°C) on 6 Oct off the Balearic Island (JP).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*.** Only two gulls with darker backs were seen in the central Caspian Sea, on 29 Apr '97 (SJH). Going southseen to 27.7°N 21.5°W off West Africa on 2 Oct '95, and returning north an immature at 43.2°N 16.5°W (13-14°C) on 29 Apr '98, five adults at 46.4°N 14.9°W (12°C) next day, 60 (half adult) at 48.4°N 9.5°W (12°C) on 1 May, 75 (90% adult) at 49.9°N 2.7°W (11°C) next day, and 84 at 52.7°N 1.9°E (9°C) on 3 May (NM).

**Heuglin's Gull *Larus heuglini*.** Among the commonest migrants in the central Caspian Sea in '97, with peaks in April and October (SJH).

**Armenian Gull *Larus armenicus*.** Only one party of ten adults seen in the central Caspian Sea on 1 May in the spring in '97, but scores present in the autumn, with a peak in early October (SJH).

**Yellow-legged Gull *Larus michahellis*.** Seen between 1.4-20.3°E and 37.5-41.2°N (23-28°C) in the Mediterranean 13 times, with hundreds at 29.7°N 02.5°E (26°C) on 23 Sep and 100 at 39.7°N 02.5°E (26°C) on 20 July off Mallorca, and also 40 gulls of this type at Morji Beach, Goa (16°N 74°E) on 5 Feb (JP). Twenty at Muscat on 29 Sept (SC).

**Pontic Gull *Larus cachinnans*.** One of the commonest seabirds in the central Caspian Sea, with peaks in Feb-Apr and Oct '97. Two adults on 26 Apr and up to ten between 28 Sep-5 Oct identified as **Herring Gulls *L. argentatus*** were described as having heavy bills and very pale grey mantles with little black at the wingtip, which also seems like this form (SJH).

**Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*.** One off C Frio, Brazil, on 21 Oct '92 and at 46°S 56.5°W on the way to the Falklands on 23 Oct '95, a number there, and up to 50 between 60.3-67.8°S 46.9-69.2°W (0.1°-1.8°C) in the Antarctic in Mar '98 and '99 (NM). Paul Lehman (1999)

reports that a number have been reported in North America in recent years, with at least five breeding and hybridising with Herring Gulls on islets off the coast of Louisiana since the late 1980s. We reported last year that they may have occurred at Ascension, and they have also been reported in West Africa in the Gambia since '92. It seems likely that they arrived there by following ships.

**Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus*.** Four immatures at 34.8°S 136.2°E (35m, 19.8°C) off South Australia on 6 Apr (NGC).

**White-eyed Gull *Larus leucophthalmus*.** TJ saw 22 in the Gulf of Aqaba on 19 Feb '99.

**Sooty Gull *Larus hemprichii*.** Ca 100 in Mina Qaboos Harbour, Oman, on 30 Nov and 17 Dec and ca 50 off Sir Abu Nu'air Island in the southern Gulf on 14 Dec '95 (CR).

**Great Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*.** One by the King Fahd causeway, from Bahrain to Saudi Arabia, on 12 Dec '95 and off Doha next day, six off Khor as Shama on 16 Dec and four at 23.8°N 58.4°E 12nm off Muscat, next day (CR), 40 at Morji Beach, Goa (16°N 74°E) on 5 Feb '98 (JP). Stan Howe saw it at Zowai Lake, Ethiopia (7.9°N 38.7°E) on 1 Feb '98.

**Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*.** Ten at Morji Mach, Goa (16°N 74°E), on 5 Feb (JP).

**Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*.** Four at 38°S 142°E (48-60m, 11.5-12.1°) off southern Australia on 31 May and 60 at 38°S 144°E (34-62m 14.8°C) next day (NGC).

**Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*.** CR saw 400 at Khasab, SE Arabia, on 15 Dec '95, and JP five at Morji Beach, Goa (16°N 74°E), on 5 Feb '98.

**Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini*.** One at 40.7°N 16.6°W in the Western Approaches on 28 Apr (NM) one at 47-48°N 5°W and an adult and two immatures at 46-47°N 5°W on 16 Sep and one at 43-44°N 5°W with seven at 44-45°N 5°W next day (IGJ).

**Black-legged Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*.** At 40.0°N 51.4°E in the central Caspian Sea SJH saw an immature at intervals from 24 Jan to 24 Feb '97 with an adult on 28-30 Jan (SJH). In the Western Approaches 18 at 46.4°N 14.9°W (12°C) on 30 Apr '98, over 100 (4/5 adult) at 48.4°N 9.5°W 52.7°N 1.9°E (9°0 on 3 May (NM), and five at 43°N 4°W on 15 Oct (SH and DH). Up to 14 off the Hebrides in June, and 28 at 54.5°N 04.5°W on 3 Oct and five at 54.5°N 04.8°W on 13 Oct in the Irish Sea (PB).

### **TERNs *Sterninae***

**Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*.** Two at 43-44°N 5°W in the Bay of Biscay on 17 Sep (IGJ).

**Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*.** Six at Morji Beach, Goa (16°N 74°E) on 5 Feb (JP).

**Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*.** SC saw 20-25 over fish anchored at 26.6°N 50.9°E off N Bahrain on 8 Apr and one with other gull and terns in the Suez Canal on 11 Oct.

**South American Tern *Sterna hirundinacea*.** Five off Cape Frio, Brazil on 21 Oct '92, at 38.4°S 56.5°W on 29 Oct, and at 52.7°S 57.4°W (9.5°C) off East Cove in the Falklands on 30 Mar '98, one on the way to Stanley on 1 Apr, and three at Stanley on 26 Mar '99 (NM).

**Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*.** One at 47-48°N 5°W in the Western Approaches on 16 Sep and nine with 23 common/arctic terns at 49-50°N 3-5°W next day (ICJ), two at Funchal, Madeira, on 1 Oct '95, and in the South Atlantic three at 32.1°S 51.1°W on 24 Oct '92, one at 33.5°S 47°W on 17 Oct '95, four at 34.5°S 52°W next day, one at 36°S 55.5°W on 21 Oct '95, and one within 100 miles of the Falklands on 24 Oct '95 (NM). Up to 12 six times between 39.0-41.2°N and 07.6-20.8°E in the Mediterranean in June and July '98 (JP), and off SE Arabia at least ten at 25.1°N 57.0°E, on the shelfbreak 35nm off Shinas, Oman on 1 Dec '95, one at Khawr as Shamms on 16 Dec, and at least 50 in Mina Qaboos Harbour, Oman, next day (CR).

**Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*.** While returning from the South Atlantic 25 at 03.4°N 24.6°W (29°0' on 19 Apr, seven at 07.0°N 24.2°W (28.5°0' next day, six at 10.5°N 21.8°W (26°C) on 21 Apr, five at 15.1°N 21.4°W (23°C) next day, one at 19.7°N 21.0°W (22°C) on 23 Apr and 46.4°N 14.9°W (12°C) on 30 Apr, 11 at 48.4°N 9.5°W (12°C) on 1 May and one with unidentified terns at 52.7°N 1.9°R (9°C) off Grimsby on 3 May (NM). One with other terns in the Western Approaches at 49-50°N 3-5°W on 17 Sep (IGJ).

**Antarctic Tern *Sterna vittata*.** Up to 14 eleven times between 62.7- 67.8°S and 46.9-69.2°W (0.1-1.5°C) in the Antarctic in Mar '98 and '99 (NM).

**White-cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa*.** An adult found resting on the top navigation light on the foremast at 40.0°N 51.4°E in the Caspian Sea on 14 May '97 stayed for nearly an hour giving excellent views in a very good light. It took a short, brief flight after preening and returned to its perch but was not seen to leave. It was dark grey overall with a very deeply forked tail with long streamers, and a white stripe on the sides of the face. The underparts were light grey and the underwing very white in the centre, the legs red and the bill blackish-red (SJH) (They do not appear to have been reported here before). In the Persian/Arabian Gulf one between Khasab-Uma al Fayarrin, N Oman, on 16 Dec '95 (CR) and ca 50 entering Doha Harbour, Qatar on 16 Apr '98, 30-40 at Mina Sulmain, Bahrain on 7-12 May, and 500 in winter plumage leaving Abu Dhabi on 1 Sep (SC).

**Bridled Tern *Sterna anaethetus*.** Around southern Arabia one between Khasab Umm al Fayarrin, N Oman, and an immature in the Straits Hormuz on 16 Dec '95 (CR), two at 28.5°N 49.7°E on 6 May '98, 300-400 at 25.°N 54.4°E on 1 Aug, one at 14.0°N 49.7°E on 5 Oct, groups of up to 50 at 12.4°N 44.7-43.3°E next day, and up to 100 at 12.4°N 44.7-43.3°E on 7 Oct (SC).

**Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata*.** In the tropical Atlantic ca 120 at 5°S 33.5°W on 8 May '92, ca 100 at 5.8°S 33.0°W on 17 Oct '92, three at 9°S 3CW next day, and ca 20 at 1°N 25.6°W on 8 Oct '95 (NM). In the Gulf of Oman one at 23.9°N 58.5°E on 26 Sep '98 (SC) and seven 'immatures with dark heads' in the Straits Hormuz on 16 Dec '95 (CR) Off eastern Australia three at 32°S 152°E (210m, 27.0°W on 31 Jan '99 (NGC).

**Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*.** Two at 38.9°N 20.8°E (27°C) off Cephalonia on 23 June (JP), and twelve in Tokyo Bay on 20 June (SC).

**Swift Tern *Sterna bergii*.** Off southern Arabia two at 25.1°N 57.0°E, on the shelfbreak 35mn off Shinas and five north of Diba-Bayah on 1 Dec '95, one in Mina Qaboos Harbour on 17 Dec (CR), 25 perched on buoys leaving Doha Harbour on 20 Apr '98, two at 28.5°N 49.7°E on 6 May, and one at Mina Sulmain, Bahrain on 7-12 May (SC). Off southern Australia three at 43°S 147°E (15-72m, 16.2°C) on 19 Mar, two at 37°S 139°E (39m, 17.5°C) on 23 Mar and 36°S 136°E (240-135m, 18.4°C) on 25 Mar, 25 at 35°S 134°E (121-86m, 19.8-9.5°C) next day, one at 34°S 133°E (120m, 20.0°C) on 27 Mar, three at 33°S 133°E (57-83m) on 29 Mar, four at 32°S 133°E (72-54m, 19.4-18.3°C) on 30 Mar, seven at 31°S 130°E (52-38m, 19.0°C) on 2 Apr, one at 32°S 129°E (50m, 19.9-19.2°C) on 4 Apr, and two at 38°S 142°E (48-60m, 11.5-12.1°C) on 31 May, off eastern Australia one at 33°S 151°E (73-94m, 20.0°C) and 32°S 152°E (94m, 20.5°C) on 15 Nov, four at 29°S 153°E (68-372m, 24.7-25.4°C) on 21 Jan '99, one at 30°S 153°E (152-765m, 27.0-26.4°C) on 23 Jan, six at 32°S 152°E (72-150m, 22.9-27.3°C) on 29 Jan, and one at 30°S 153°E (52-68m, 26.6°C) on 1 Feb (NGC).

**Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*.** Off SE Arabia at least twenty 5nm north of Diba-Bayah, Oman, on 1 Dec '95, one near Sir Abu Nu' air Island on 14 Dec, and at least five in Mina Qaboos Harbour on 17 Dec (CR), two entering Abu Dhabi on 29 Aug '98 and 24 leaving Bahrain on 24 Sep (SC). Four at Morji Beach, Goa (16°N 74°E), on 4 Feb (JP).



**Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*.** In the Western Approaches two at 46-47°N 5°W on 16 Sep and at 49-50°N 3-5°W next day (ICJ), off SE Arabia ten 5nm N Diba-Bayah, Oman on 1 Dec '95, twenty in the channel approaching Kuwait on 10 Dec over 200 near Sir Abu'air Island on 14 Dec, and over 20 off Khasab next day (CR), and over 100 entering Muscat on 29 Sep '98 (SC). Two at Morji Beach, Goa (16°N 74°E) on 5 Feb (JP).

**Brown Noddy *Anous stolidus*.** Eleven at 12.4°N 44.7-43.3°E in the Gulf of Oman on 7 Oct (SC) and two overnight at 19.1°N 136.3°E (28°C) in the NW Pacific on 11-12 Apr '99 (TG98).

**Blue-grey Noddy *Procelsterna cerulea*.** One at 32°S 152°E (240m, 26.7°C) off eastern Australia on 30 Jan '99 following cyclones in the Coral Sea, described as a small blue-grey tern shading to almost white on the head, the primaries and tail darker mid-grey, bill black, flying steadily into wind ca 8m above the sea (NGC).

### ALCIDS *Alcidae*

There are a number of records from the recognised range around the UK by NM and PB, and off western Canada by TJ.

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**Average waterbirds/day seen by Chief Engineer SJ Hingston in the oilfield safety vessel mv *Tabriz Khalilbeyli* in the central Caspian Sea, 1997.**

Month: Days	Jan 5	Feb 21	Apr 18	May 15	Jul 10	Aug 3	Sep 3	Oct 12	Nov 2	Dec 8	Total 97
Great-crested Grebe											
<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	0.8	1.0					0.2				29
Red-necked Grebe											
<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>	0.3	0.4									10
Large grebe											
<i>Podiceps</i>		0.1									3
Black-necked Grebe											
<i>Podiceps nigricollis</i>			0.2							0.9	10
Great Cormorant											
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>				0.2	1.4			0.1		0.6	22
Red-necked Phalarope											
<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>			0.8								15
Pomarine Skua											
<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>			3.9	21.5							391
Arctic Skua											
<i>S. parasiticus</i>			11.1	25.9				0.3	0.5		593
Small skua											
<i>Stercorarius</i> sp?			6.5	2.0							147
Little Gull											
<i>Larus minutus</i>	135	225			0.1			0.2		1.1	5413
Mediterranean Gull											
<i>Larus melanocephalus</i>			0.1	0.1						0.2	3
Black-headed Gull											
<i>Larus ribibundus</i>	86	44	0.9	0.2	0.2			19	5.3	44	2040
Great Gull											
<i>Larus ichthyæetus</i>	0.4	0.3								0.4	12
Common Gull											
<i>Larus canus</i>				0.8						0.7	18
Herring Gull											
<i>Larus argentatus</i>				0.4				1.2			23
Pontic Gull											
<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	70	122	84	39	32	12	143	138	160	58	8637
Heuglin's Gull											
<i>L. heuglini/taimyrensis</i>		0.8	34	16	3.1	34	41	39	100	3.1	1811
Armenian Gull											
<i>Larus armenicus</i>			0.5				24	43	23	12	743
Lesser Black-backed Gull											
<i>Larus fuscus</i>			0.1								2
Black-legged Kittiwake											
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	1.2	0.8									23
Gull-billed Tern											
<i>Sterna nilotica</i>			4.7	2.7							124
Caspian Tern											
<i>Sterna caspia</i>			4.2	0.1							77
Sandwich Tern											
<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>			174	78	5.2	90	1.3	9.6			5215
White-cheeked Tern											
<i>Sterna repressa</i>				0.1							1
Common Tern											
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>			108	79	2.4	37		0.7			3274
Little Tern											
<i>Sterna albifrons</i>			0.1	0.1	0.1						4
Tern											
<i>Sterna</i> sp?			81								1450
Whiskered Tern											
<i>Chlidonias hybridus</i>			1.7	0.4							36
White-winged Tern											
<i>Chlidonias leucoptera</i>			0.1								1

## LANDBIRDS FROM SHIPS AT SEA

Analyst by Michael Casement

The following landbird report sheets (numbers shown in brackets) were received during the last year. Extracts are shown in the appropriate geographical sections using the observer's initials:

Captain NG Cheshire NM, R V *Franklin*, 22 March '98, off S Australia (1)

Petty Officer SC Copey, RN, HMS *York*, 7 March-16 October 1998, UK to Persian Gulf (via Med)-Singapore-Persian Gulf-UK (via Med) (22)

Chief Engineer SJ Hingston MN, MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli*, fixed position 40.0°N 51.4E, Caspian Sea, 17 April-31 December 1997 - 38 report sheets of detailed observations including weather data, and 30 35mm colour slides.

Genevieve Leaper, Claire Pollock, Caroline Stone *et al* (Seabirds at Sea Team - SAST) - ten sheets of landbird observations in UK coastal waters (N Sea, E Atlantic) aboard various vessels in 1993 and 1994.

Nigel Milius - My apologies for mis-spelling his name last year (incorrectly as 'Millis' -see *Sea Swallow* 47: 37 and captions page 41). He has now added a series of landbird extracts from previous trips between the UK and the Falklands 1992-1998.

Mrs Judith Pentreath, Yacht *Salvation Jane* 11 September-7 October 1998, Minorca-Majorca-Ibiza-W Med, several landbird records with seabird observations.

Captain T Johannssen MN, MV *Dorthe Oldendorff* 17 February 1999, Singapore-Aqaba and return. Landbird record with seabird report (1).

Also included in the appropriate tables are several landbird observations received from Mr and Mrs Ian Johnson (IGJ) in notes made on a ferry trip Portsmouth-Bilbao 16-18 September 1998. Pride of place this year must go to Stewart Hingston for his comprehensive records, throughout 1997, from an oil platform in the South Caspian Sea. Having been a regular and conscientious RNBWS observer over many years, his detailed records from ocean passages were a regular feature of *Sea Swallows* throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, but not for the past 15 years, because his activities have taken him elsewhere - for his last contribution see *Sea Swallow* 37.

Apart from the major contributions from Steve Copey and Stewart Hingston, this has been another very disappointing year for landbird records from RNBWS seaborne observers, and the regular flow of Met Log extracts received from the Met Office, which has for many years provided a wealth of interesting records, also seems to have dried up; none have reached me this year, and I hope the arrangements can be restored for the future.

### SECTION A - EAST ATLANTIC (EAST OF 30°W), BAY OF BISCAY and IBERLANT

#### 1992

On 15 May, NM recorded a single Swallow *Hirundo rustica* at 22°N 23°W, 350nm west of Cape Blanco, Mauretania, and a Woodchat Shrike *Lanius senator* (M) on 18th at 32.8°N 18.4°W, 30nm west of Madeira.

On 22-24 May, (on passage to Grimsby), NW recorded Swallows (8) and House Martins *Delichon urbica* (5) at 48°N 8°W 13nm west of Ushant.





Little Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis* (juv) - South Caspian Sea MV *Tabriz Khalalbeyli* 19 October 1997. Photo: Chief Engineer SJ Hingston MN.

On 4 October, NM recorded a Blackbird *Turdus merula* (imm M), and a Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* at 48°N 8°W, 130nm west of Ushant. (COMMENT. Further landbird records on this southward passage appear in extracts from Captain Elliott's Met. Report from *MV James C Ross* - see *Sea Swallow* 45: 48. The dark heron reported therein, seems more likely to have been a Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*, rather than Grey Heron, as suggested).

### 1993

SAST observations from RV *Geolog*. *Dmitriy Nalivkin* in the Irish Sea 1-15 May recorded a northerly passage of Swallows, at 53.3°W 04.8°W, in Cardigan Bay, mostly in ones and twos each day, but numbers increased on 11th to 121 (in groups of 5-10) between 12.20 and 14.10, with further groups continuing until 1850. Also sighted on 11th were: Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* (4 at 0925), a possible Sparrow Hawk *Accipiter nisus* (1 at 1040 at 58.0°N 04.0°W), Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* (2 singles), House Martin (2+2), Sedge Warbler *Acrocephalus*

*schoenobaenus* (1), Pied Wagtail *Motacilla alba* (1) and Dunlin *Calidris alpina* (1) at 52.9°N 05.0°W (10nm SW Wales). Further sightings on 12th included Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* (1) at 53.0°N 05.0°W, which remained until 13th catching flies on deck, also Swallows (4) and Whimbrel (1) at 1940 flying NW.

SAST records from MS *Estuair Dana* in the SW approaches 17-21 July included Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* on 17th at 51.5°N 05.3°W (off Fastnet); Curlew *Numenius arquata* (1 flying NE) and Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* (1 on deck) on 18th at 50.3°N 06.9°W (25nm NW Scillies); Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* (1 flying NE) on 21st at 48.4°N 10.0°W (165nm west of Brest).

Further SAST records from MV *Challis* in this area 19-20 August include Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* (1) and Swift *Apus apus* (1) at 48°N 09.0°W (120nm SW Scillies); three Turnstones (3) on 20th at 49.7°N 07.4°W (45nm SW Scillies).

At 1430 on 27 September, a Merlin *Falco columbarius* (F) was recorded (SAST) at 53.3°N 14.5°W (1160nm of Ireland) - it circled ship and landed aboard for 30 minutes. It took off and was chased by an Arctic Skua *Stercorarius parasiticus*. At 1630 it caught a storm-petrel, and returned aboard to pluck and eat it. Three Dunlin *Calidris alpina* were recorded on 29 September at 51.6°N 11.8°W (40nm SW Ireland).

## 1998

At 1600 on 7 March, SCC recorded a Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (F) and a Swallow aboard at 36.5°N 00.2°W, 40nm south of Cape St Vincent (Portugal).

At 1930 on 16 September, while heading south across the Bay of Biscay, IGJ saw Meadow Pipits *Anthus pratensis* (9+2); and good views of a probable Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* following the ship at about 46°N 05°W (110nm SW Lorient). It appeared to be associating with another ferry also heading south, and a number of other reports of this species over this period suggest it was probably part of a major invasion to Western Europe - 51 were reported in Britain and Ireland during September - *Birding World* 11: 327. Two White Wagtails *Motacilla alba* were sighted at 1330 on 17th, and a Robin *Eritacus rubecula* aboard at 0830 on 18th, which remained all the way back to the UK.

## SECTION B - ENGLISH CHANNEL, NORTH SEA and BALTIC

### 1992

On 3 October, when heading west, at 50°N 01° - 02°W (north of Cherbourg), NM recorded a Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis* and a Chiffchaff *Philloscopus collybita* aboard.

### 1994

SAST observations from RV *Cirolana* during the period 11-25 August, in the central North Sea included the following waders:

Redshank *Tringa totanus* (1) on 12 August at 56.7°N 06.3°E (60nm west of Denmark); another on at 18th at 61.3°N 01.3°E - this remained aboard for two days feeding on fish around the trawl net.

Curlew *Numenius arquata* (3) on 16th 59.3°E 03.3°E (60nm WNW Stavanger) and four on 25th at 57.3°N 02.7°E.



Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* - South Caspian Sea MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli*, 19 November 1997. Photo: Chief Engineer SJ Hingston MN.

Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* (8) at 60.0°N 01.3°W, (in Forties oilfield, 110m E Kinnaird's Read).

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* (1+4+2) on 24th at 56.9°N 02.4°E (70nm ESE Aberdeen) - two remained two days, feeding on fish scraps.

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* (1) on 24th.

Oystercatcher *Himantopus ostralegus* (1) on 24th.

Probable Sanderling *Calidris alba* (6) on 24th; also several other unidentified waders and plover species.

An unidentified bunting landed aboard on 11th, and two Grey Herons *Ardea cinerea* were sighted on 22nd at 57.9°N 02.0°E (120nm E Kinnaird's Hd). A Sandmartin *Riparia riparia* was seen on 24th and 2-3 White Wagtails *Motacilla* were aboard on 22nd at 57.6°N 01.6°E.

Further SAST observations during the period 21 October-17 November included the following passerine species:

Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (20) on 21 October at 52.2°N 01.7°E. 15mn SE Suffolk; 1+6 on 28th at 55.9°N 02.2°E and singles on 7 and 8 November at 60.2°N 03.0°E (60nm SW Stavanger).

Unidentified pipit *Anthus sp.* (1) landed on deck on 27 October at 54.9°N 00.2°E (28nm NE Whitby).

Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* (1) on 29 October at 55.6°N 04.6°E (110nm west of Stavanger).

Redwing *Turdus iliacus* (1+3 +7, also unidentified thrush sp) on 30th at 54.9°N 05.2°E (100nm west of Denmark) A Redwing was found dead on 31st; being pecked at by Herring



Gull *Larus argentatus*.

Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* (1) on 7 November at 58.5°N 03.6°E (70nm SW Stavanger).

Golderest *Regulus igicapillus* (1) circling ship at 60.6N 02.4E (65nm west of Bergen).

Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* (IF) aboard on 17 November at 56.7°N 01.3°E (Fulmar Oilfield, 120nm ESE St Abbs Head).

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (1 M) was seen on 4 November at 58°E 103.7°E (60nm SW Stavanger) A single Dunlin was seen on 27 October at 54.9°N 00.2°E (28nm NE Whitby).

## **SECTION C - WEST ATLANTIC (WEST OF 30°W)**

**1998**

(no records)

## **SECTION D - GULF OF MEXICO AND CARIBBEAN**

**1998**

(no records)

## **SECTION E - MEDITERRANEAN**

**1998**

On 1300 on 13 March SCC had close views of two Red-rumped Swallows *Hirundo daurica* at 34.5°N 28.0°E, 90nm SE of Crete. At 1315, a single adult male Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* landed aboard for 5 minutes.

On southward transit of the Suez Canal am on 15 March, SCC identified the following species:

Hooded Crow *Corvus cornix*, (numerous) Curlew *Numenius arquata* (2), Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* (c 12), Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* (c 30), Short-toed Eagle *Circus gallicus* (one flew low overhead).

On 21 September, JP saw evidence of autumn migration at 39.9°N 02.9°M, on rounding Cap de Formentos, (Majorca), including Eleonora's Falcons *Falco eleonora* (8), Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (4) and Northern Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe* at 39.9°N 02.9°N heading south. One Wheatear was aboard for 90 minutes.

On transit north of the Suez Canal on 11 October, SCC saw: Coot *Fulica atra* (1), Grey Heron (single perched on a buoy), Pied Kingfisher (3), Black-winged Stilt (6), Hooded Crow (15), Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* (numerous - very common along the banks), Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* (a mass of pink seen at a distance of 2km, on approaching Port Said).

At noon on 12 October SCC saw a single Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* aboard at 34.5°N 28.0°E, 90nm ESE Crete. It fluttered around ship for 20 minutes, and was last seen flying low, south. A Phylloscopus Warbler, possibly a Wood Warbler *P. sibilatrix* (while belly noted) and a Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* were also sighted aboard.

A Song Thrush *Thurndus philomelos* was found in the hangar at 1000 on 15 October, at 38.0°N 08.2°E, 55nm south of Sardinia. During the period 1000-1040, at least 20 Robins *Erithacus rubecula*, were briefly around the ship - seen arriving from NE, in singles and small groups and departed south. The wind was westerly 10kts. A single Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* was observed in winter plumage also identified was a Blackbird *Turdus merula* (F) and a Chiffchaff *P. collybita*.

Three more Starlings and a Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (F) were seen on 16 October at 37.0°N 02.0°E, 40nm north of Algeria.

## **SECTION F - RED SEA AND GULF OF ADEN**

**1998**

On 6 October, SCC photographed a Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis* aboard, while replenishing from RFA *Brambleleaf* off Aden, at 12.4°N 44°E, four House Crows *Corvus splendens* were seen flying around the rigging, but not leaving the RFA. Also first seen aboard the RFA was a Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*, feeding on migrants. It transferred to HMS *York*, where it remained for 48 hours, diving at and catching small birds in mid-air. It was seen eating one at the stern, and the remains of a Tree Pipit was later found on the signal deck. SCC also photographed a Yellow-bellied Green Pigeon *Treron waalia* first seen aboard the tanker, and a Hoopoe *Upupa epops*. Also seen during this period (1000-1600), were: Great White Egret *Egretta alba* (two flying overhead SW), European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* (one found in the hangar), Wheatear sp. *Oenanthe* sp. (3 flew past low SW), Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (10 hawking around ship for 15 minutes before departing S), and a Little Swift *Apus affinis* (single, with swallows, dep. S), and an Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* (observed closely on guard-rail).

On 8 October, in the central Red Sea (21.1°N 38.2°E), SCC recorded a Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* (Juv M) and a Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* aboard.

**1999**

On 17 February, when heading north through Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, TJ recorded four Hoopoes *Upupa epops* which remained on board all day.

## **SECTION G - INDIAN OCEAN AND ARABIAN SEA**

**1998**

At 1130 on 3 October, SCC recorded a single Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* and a Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* catching insects around the ship at 22.6°N 60.1°E, off Ras el Hadd; also a Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* aboard until next day.

## **SECTION H - PERSIAN GULF AND GULF OF OMAN**

**1998**

On 22 April, SCC recorded the following species feeding on numerous insects aboard, at 29.6°N 49.1°E, 50nm south of Iraq: Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* (1M, 1F), Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava feldegg* (1M, 2F), Willow Warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (1), Chiffchaff *P. collybita*, Cinereus Bunting *Emberiza cinerarius* (3 possibles), and a Hoopoe Lark *Alaemon alaudipes* (good view and photographed).

At 2100-2240 on 24 April a Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* was identified and photographed at 25.3°N 54.0°E, 50nm south of coast of Iran.

On 1 May a Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* was found in the hangar at 27.0°N 54.0°E, 30nm south of Iran. Another Nightjar was aboard 90nm east of Kuwait (at 29.5°N 48.9°E) on 3 May; also, feeding on insects aboard, Common Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* (2), and Redstart (F).

On 4 May, in the same area, a Redstart (F), Hoopoe Lark (1), Isabelline Shrike *Lanius isabellinus* (1) feeding on insects.

On 6 May, at 28.5°N, 49.9°N 100nm ESE Kuwait, two possible Marsh Warblers *Acrocephalus palustris* were found trapped in an air vent - one was already dead, and the second died later.



Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* (M) 6 May 1997, South Caspian Sea  
MV Tabriz Khalilbeyli, 19 October 1997. Photo: Chief Engineer SJ Hingston MN.

A probable Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* was aboard at 1600.

On 15 May a single laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* was briefly aboard at 29.5°N 49.2°E, 50nm south of Iraq, and a Nightjar, in the same area on 16th.

On 12 August, SCC recorded a single Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* aboard for one hour at 26.2°N 53.3°E, 40nm south of Iran coast.

Two Hoopoes *Upupa epops* were aboard during morning watch on 24 August at 29.6°N 49.5°E, 50nm south of Iraq, and a single on 25th in the same area.

On 27 August, SCC photographed a probable Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus* aboard, and a Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* was seen flying around at 29.5°N 49.4°E.

In a similar area, on 2 September, SCC saw a Yellow Wagtail, thought to have been of the race *MF beema* and photographed a probable Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola*.

At 29.6°N 49.2°E, off Iraq, on 3 September, three Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* (2M, 1F) arrived together, and flew around the ship for 10 minutes, and three Sand Martins *Riparia riparia* hunting insects alongside the ship. A Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, in non-breeding plumage, was seen briefly aboard; also a probable Citrine Wagtail, five Hoopoes, and a Nightjar were reported aboard.

SCC identified An Olivaceous Warbler *Hippolais pallida* feeding on insects at 1140 on 4th and a single Kestrel settled aboard at 1830. A flock of about 100 Bee Eaters *Merops* sp. flew noisily overhead, at about. 150ft, at 1830; it was too dark to identify whether European or Blue-cheeked *M apiaster* or *M superciliosus*.

At 0530 on 5th, SCC photographed a Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* around the ship 50 minutes, at 29.5°N 49.2°E, and saw an unidentified 'eagle', probably a Buzzard/Booted Eagle *Buteo* sp. at 1530.

In the same area on 18th, a Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* (imm) perched briefly on it guardrail at 1830, and a Scops Owl *Otus scops* was photographed aboard at 1400 on 19th; a



single Barn Swallow flew overhead at 1830. A Hobby *Falco subbuteo* was photographed aboard briefly at 1600 on 20th.

A single Hoopoe was seen aboard at 26.0°N 55.5°E, 30nm south of Iran, on 25 September, and an unidentified nightjar *Caprimulgus* sp. was seen briefly on 27th at 23.6°N 58.6°E, in the Gulf of Oman.

SCC saw two Little Egrets *Egretta garzetta* perched on the breakwater, on entering Muscat on 29 September.

## **SECTION I - PACIFIC, CHINA SEA, YELLOW SEA, CORAL SEA AND PHILIPPINE SEA**

### **1998**

On 23 March, NGC recorded a Fork-tailed Swift *Apus pacificus* at 37.8°S 140.2°E, 5nm off coast near Cape Northumberland - 'A large brown swift flew past with long forked tail and white rump'.

On 1 June, while approaching Sembawang, Straits of Johore, SCC saw a White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* (3), Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* (5), Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*, Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* and Little Heron *Butorides striatus* (3)

On 5 July SCC had excellent views of three White-bellied Sea Eagles, off the entrance to Sembawang.

## **SECTION J - SOUTH ATLANTIC**

### **1992**

In amplification of his observations of Cattle Egrets *Bubulcus ibis* reported in *Sea Swallow* 47:4, NM submitted additional records of this species from earlier trips: singles were seen off Stanley, Falklands on 24 April and at 47.5°S 57.5°W, 240nm north of Falklands on 25th. Seven were recorded at 35°S 51°W, off River Plate on 30 April, two at 32.5°S 51°W, (75nm east of Rio Grande, Brazil) on 1 May, and three next day.

### **1995**

On 12 October, NM recorded a single Swallow *Hirundo rustica* at 15.5°S 33.5°W, 300nm SE Salvadore, Brazil, and two at 28°S 41°W, 240nm SE Rio de Janeiro on 15 October; also a Chestnut-capped Blackbird *Agelaius ruficapillus* at 34°S 41°W, 460nm SE Cape Sta. Marta Grande, Brazil, on 16th.

On 21 October, two Cattle Tyrants *Machaetornis rixosus* came aboard in the River Plate area at 35.2°S 55.6°W, 30nm SE Uruguay; one stayed to Falklands on 24th, (and a colour slide sent to Robin Woods). The weather was warm and sunny, wind variable force 1-2, temp 21°C. The weather was similar next morning (22nd), but cloudy with thunderstorms at 1350, and northerly winds force 5-6. A Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*, a Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana* at 41.5°S 55.5°W (240nm SE Argentina) and two Rufous-collared Sparrows *Zonotrichia capensis* at 40.4°S 55.5°W probably arrived aboard during the passing of this front, and remained until arrival at Falklands on 24th. (COMMENT. Two Fork-tailed Flycatchers were also recorded on 24 October by GH Walton at 38.85°S 55.1°W 120nm east of Mar del Plata - see *Sea Swallow* 45:55.)

## **THE CASPIAN SEA**

### **Observations from MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli* in fixed location**

**40.0°N 51-4°E, 48nm SSE of Baku, Azerbaijan.**

These are the first records received by RNBWS from the Caspian - an area closed to western eyes in the decades of the Cold War with the Soviet Union - and are therefore not comparable with previous landbird analyses in these pages. Moreover, Stewart Hingston is currently writing up a similar series of observations for 1998 so it is hoped to publish next year a more detailed analysis, covering both years. It is already clear that passerine migration over this sea takes place on a massive scale, involving an exciting variety of species not previously recorded by ships in the Mediterranean or Black Sea. Selected highlights only are summarised here, to give a flavour of what is to come.

Daily observations cover the following months, in 1997 (number of recording days in each month):

17-30 April (14), 1-10 and 14-18 May (15), 4-30 July (14), 4, 10-12 August (4), 24-30 September (7), 1-31 October (30), 1-7 November (7) and 19-30 December (4). Thus observations covered the main peaks of the spring and autumn migrations, in April and October.

The most abundant passerine species recorded in spring was **Yellow Wagtail** *Motacilla flava*, almost all of which were identified as the north Scandinavian race *M. fl. thunbergi* these were recorded in small numbers almost daily throughout April and May (max 30+ on 6 May). In autumn, the dominant species was **White Wagtail** *M. alba*, recorded daily throughout October, with several 100s daily in early October, with a peak of 400+ on 6th. Two **Citrine Wagtails** *M. citreola* were identified aboard on 25 September (\*Male superbly coloured with bright yellow head and upperparts, other much duller. Both had broad double pure white wing-bars. Heard calling to each other, a very harsh tzeep\*).

### **Thirteen species of raptors were identified, including:**

Steppe Buzzard *Buteo buteo* - 25 April (1), 30 April (4) and 1 May (36+).

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* - 1 May (1), 2 May (11) and 15 May (7).

Probable Booted Eagle *Hieraaetus pennatus* - 16 May (7).

Eurasian Sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* - 25 April (1), 16 October (2) 30 October (7), 3 November (44), 4 November (80) and 7 November (4).

Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis* - 3 Oct (3) and 7 October (1).

Saker Falcon *Falco cherrug* - 27 Apr (2), and singles on 20 October and 21 October.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* - singles on 8 and 20 October.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* - 26 October (single M flew past slowly heading S).

Merlin *Falco columbarius* on 19 October (1 juv. aboard briefly).

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* - 28 April (1 heading N), 18 July (1F resting aboard), 30 September (1M flying SE), 1 October (3 singles flying SE), 7 October (1M from N, flew off S).

Hobby *Falco subbuteo* - 1 May (one aboard 5 minutes, flew off westerly).

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus* - 6 November (1 arrived from N, mobbed by gulls, and landed briefly before departing S).

### **Heron species included:**

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* - 21 April (2), 22 April (1), 28 April (2), 4 July (1), 4 October (4), and 24 October (3).



Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* - South Caspian Sea MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli*, 15 October 1997. Photo: Chief Engineer SJ Hingston MN.



Merlin *Falco columbarius* - South Caspian Sea MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli*, 19 October 1997. Photo: Chief Engineer SJ Hingston MN.



Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* - 4 August (1 arrived from S. attempted to land but scared by helicopter and dep. NNE).

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* - 4 May (at least 1 aboard), 6 May (1), 7-11 October (up to 3 aboard), 6 November (1).

Spoonbill *Platylea leucorodia* - 30 September - group of 53 watched heading SE at 15-20m height; 4 October - group of 26 flew close past, heading SW.

Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* - 6 November (7 flying low south).

**A variety of thrush species *Turdus* sp. were recorded including:**

Dark-throated Thrush *Turdus ruficollis* - 20 October (2).

Blackbird *Turdus merula* - 20 October (4) and 7 November (2).

Dusky Thrush *Turdus naumanni* - 22 October (8).

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* - 30 October (1).

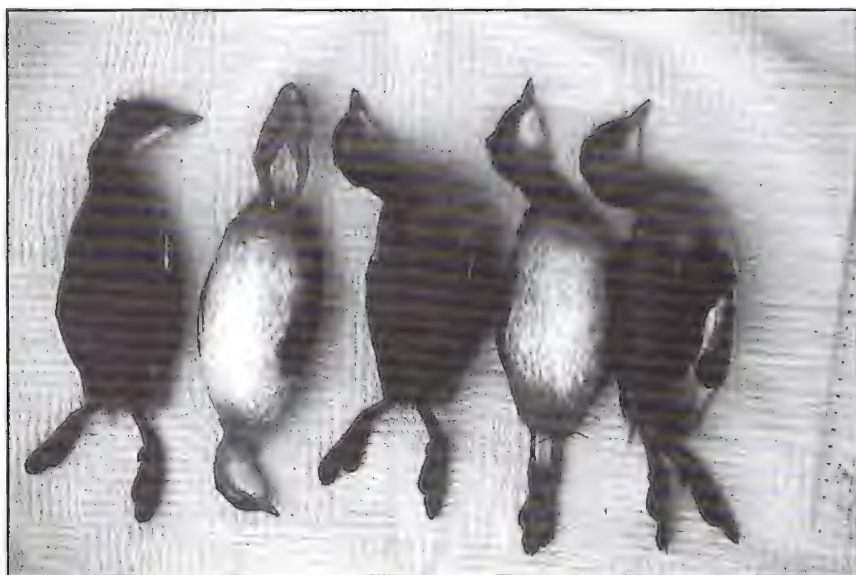
**And an interesting variety of bunting *Emberiza* sp. were noted; many could not be unidentified, but those for which fairly certain identifications were possible included:**

Black-headed Bunting *Emberiza melanocephala* - 5-7 May (1M, 1F remained aboard).

Ortolan Bunting *Emberiza hortulana* - 5 May (1M).

Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza cineracea* - 27 July (4 probables aboard), 10 August (2 probables aboard).

Yellow Bunting *Emberiza citrinella* - 19 October (family party of 3-M, F and juv).



Black-necked Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis* - Collision casualties - South Caspian Sea MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyi*, 7 November 1997. Photo: Chief Engineer SJ Hingston MN.

Rustic Bunting *Emberiza rustica* - 20 October (8 seen close aboard).

Pine Bunting *Emberiza leucocephalus* - 20 October (superbly coloured M+F aboard).

Other passerine records included:

Bearded Tit *Panurus bairdianus* - 24 October (2), 25 October (1) and 5 November (1)

Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* - 26 April (1F), 30 April (1F), 3 Oct (1M), 14-16 October (1F catching insects aboard).

Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus* - 4 May (superbly coloured M seen closely aboard), 21 October (1M).

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* - 14 October (single M aboard), 24 October (5), 25 October (1M).

Red-throated Pipit *Anthus cervinus* - single brightly coloured males on 5 May (1500-6000), and 7 November.

Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* - 7 November (single aboard most of morning).

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus rosea* - 4 May (1 adult sheltering from gale-force winds), 5 May, (1 adult); single immatures on 26 July (roosting close to Hoopoe *Upupa epops*), 27 July, 31 July, 10 August and 12 August.

**Selected oddities.** Probably the most unexpected species was a **Grey Hypocolius** *Hypocolius ampelinus* sheltering aboard on 23 October - 'like a large long-tailed Great Grey Shrike, male with black mask, sheltering from wind on upperdeck at dusk. Unable to relocate later'.

The most spectacular sighting was a **Houbara Bustard** *Chlamydotis undulata* on 20 October - 'Large bird flying around platform low over the sea, then passing very low over group of Black-headed Gulls, which emphasised its size even more.... Watched for several minutes, made no attempt to land on board, veered off and flew off SE'ly'.

At 0710 on 7 November, five **Black-necked Grebes** *Podiceps nigricollis* 'were found dead along the side of main deck, all within 2-3 metres of each other. Obvious collision casualties - all had blood at bill/nostrils and some were lying in small pools. Close proximity of corpses suggested they had been flying in a group and were probably dazzled or attracted by overside halogen floodlights.'

Pa 22.30 on 19 December, a **Red-crested Pochard** *Netta rufina* (adult F or imm), 'flew into an upper accommodation bulkhead, killing itself instantly. The thud was heard by the cabin occupant who went to investigate and found the bird, and a corresponding splash of blood on bulkhead. Thought to have been blinded or confused by overside floodlighting. Corpse kept overnight and photographed before disposal to the cook, whereupon it featured on that evening's menu, and was enjoyed by several crew members!'

It is hoped that the records for 1998, when received, will be of similar interest and variety. The intention is to compile a complete species list for the two years, together with weather data, from which to draw some worthwhile comparisons and conclusions of migration patterns over this unusual sea area.

**MBC**

## THE BIRDS OF HISTRIA

(Ornithological Comment from the Southern Danube Delta, Romania -  
1983 to 1999)

### HISTORY

During the seventh Century BC, Greek colonists from Milet, an ancient settlement on the eastern coast of Asia Minor (now present day Turkey) founded the fortified town of Histria on a bay in the western Black Sea (the present lagoon Sinoie). Over the centuries the town developed and prospered economically, becoming an important centre of trade for the region. Eventually, sand and alluvial deposits from the Danube started to isolate the bay from the sea turning it into a lagoon that was unnavigable. This combined with frequent invasions by people from the north led to the destruction and final evacuation of the settlement.

The ruins of Histria now guard the western border of Sinoie Lake which forms a part of the Razim-Sinoie lagoon complex. The region is included in the Biosphere Reserve of the Danube Delta and is designated an important Ornithological Area by Birdlife International.

### ORNITHOLOGICAL COMMENT

50 miles north of the city of Constanta, the region is easily accessible to ornithologists both from Romania and abroad. The complex consists of lakes Nuntasi, Istria and Sinoie and the neighbouring sandbanks of Chitue, Saele and Lulipor. The area is approximately 100 square kilometres and the diversity of habitat and its location on a classic migratory route make it extremely rich in avifauna with 267 species recorded in the area. Of these 94 breed, 161 are regular passage or winter visitors and 12 are accidental.

The area is notable for the varied number of aquatic species observed during migration and winter with over 400,000 individuals of 5 goose species. Passage limicoline birds can reach up to 60,000 individuals of 43 species.

Among the breeding species within the area are Cormorant, Pygmy Cormorant, Yellow Legged Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Black-headed Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Little Tern, Black Tern and White-winged Black Tern. While White Pelicans and Dalmatian Pelicans do not breed in the area they regularly visit from their breeding sites in the rest of the Danube Delta.

### COMMENT ON THE SYSTEMATIC SPECIES LIST

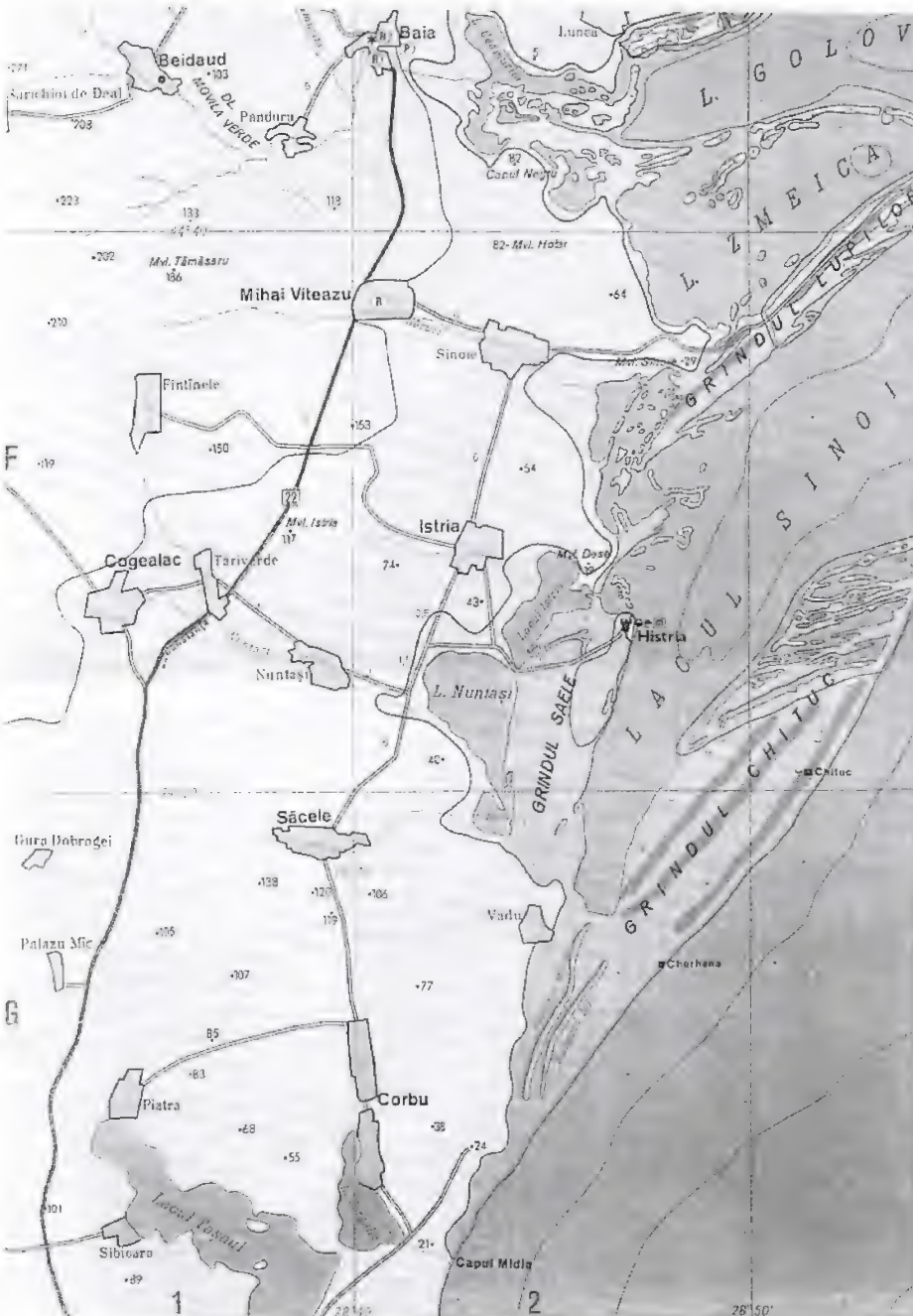
The systematic list of species observed is based on observations made during visits on 76 days between 1983 and 1999. The area was based within 6km of the ruins of Histria, which is only a very small part of the entire area. They constitute a small, but significant, addition to the knowledge being assimilated for this unique region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Dan Munteanu and Dr Peter Weber for their guidance and advice.

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# Systematic Species List - Hystria 1983 to 1999

Nr crt	ENGLISH	SCIENTIFIC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	MAX NR	DATE
1	Black-throated Diver	Gavia arctica (Linnaeus)			x										1	12.03.1995
2	Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis (Pallas)						x	x	x	x	x	x		34	21.09.1994
3	Great Crested Grebe	Podiceps cristatus (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	225	10.03.1995
4	Red-necked Grebe	Podiceps grisegena (Boddaert)			x	x		x							3	26.06.1996
5	Black-necked Grebe	Podiceps nigricollis C. L. Brehm			x	x				x	x	x			19	21.09.1994
6	Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	393	25.03.1992
7	Pygmy Cormorant	Phalacrocorax pygmaeus (Pallas)				x	x			x	x				10	05.04.1994
8	White Pelican	Pelecanus onocrotalus Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		1086	14.09.1993
9	Dalmatian Pelican	Pelecanus crispus Bruch			x	x	x	x	x	x					12	20.05.1994
10	Bittern	Botaurus stellaris (Linnaeus)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x				4	22.03.1994
11	Little Bittern	Ixobrychus minutus (Linnaeus)					x	x	x	x	x				11	03.06.1998
12	Night Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax (Linnaeus)			x	x		x	x	x	x				12	25.04.1998
13	Squacco Heron	Ardeola ralloides (Scopoli)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				50	17.09.1991
14	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		53	17.09.1991
15	Great White Egret	Casmerodius albus (Linnaeus)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	37	12.03.1995
16	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea Linnaeus	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	51	21.09.1994
17	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				31	21.08.1993
18	White Stork	Ciconia ciconia (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				50	29.05.1993
19	Glossy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				65	05.04.1994
20	Spoonbill	Platalea leucorodia Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				263	19.06.1997
21	Mute Swan	Cygnus olor (Gmelin)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	299	29.08.1991
22	Whooper Swan	Cygnus cygnus (Linnaeus)	x		x							x	x		165	21.01.1991
23	Bean Goose	Anser fabalis (Latham)	x										x	x	118	23.11.1990
24	White-fronted Goose	Anser albifrons (Scopoli)	x	x	x							x	x	x	50000	30.11.1994
25	Lesser White-fronted Goose	Anser erythropus (Linnaeus)			x								x		110	30.11.1994
26	Greylag Goose	Anser anser (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1048	30.11.1994
27	Red-breasted Goose	Branta ruficollis (Pallas)	x	x	x										2500	14.02.1998
28	Ruddy Shelduck	Tadorna ferruginea (Pallas)				x				x					10	28.08.1991
29	Shelduck	Tadorna tadorna (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	964	23.11.1990
30	Wigeon	Anas penelope Linnaeus	x	x	x	x		x			x	x	x		853	25.03.1992
31	Gadwall	Anas strepera Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		2140	23.08.1996
32	Teal	Anas crecca Linnaeus	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	x		5203	23.11.1990
33	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7095	21.01.1991
34	Pintail	Anas acuta Linnaeus			x	x					x				447	21.09.1994
35	Garganey	Anas querquedula Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				586	23.08.1996
36	Shoveler	Anas clypeata Linnaeus			x	x	x	x			x	x	x		1473	12.03.1995
37	Red-Crested Pochard	Netta rufina (Pallas)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				89	29.08.1991
38	Pochard	Aythya ferina (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1332	21.01.1991
39	Ferruginous Duck	Aythya nyroca (Guldenstadt)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		368	21.09.1994
40	Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula (Linnaeus)	x	x	x						x			x	5080	21.01.1991
41	Goldeneye	Bucephala clangula (Linnaeus)	x										x		67	21.01.1991

Nr crt	ENGLISH	SCIENTIFIC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	MAX. NR	DATE
42	Smew	<i>Mergus albellus</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x										43	21.01.1995
43	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i> Linnaeus	x		x										38	21.01.1995
44	Goosander	<i>Mergus merganser</i> Linnaeus												x	8	20.12.1990
45	Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis apivorus</i> (Linnaeus)								x					1	29.08.1991
46	White-tailed Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x								x		x	2	21.01.1991
47	Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i> (Linnaeus)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		7	28.09.1991
48	Hen Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x	x					x			x	x	3	13.01.1994
49	Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i> (Linnaeus)	x		x						x		x		1	23.09.1996
50	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i> (Linnaeus)									x	x			3	23.09.1996
51	Rough-Legged Buzzard	<i>Buteo lagopus</i> (Pontoppidan)									x				1	23.09.1996
52	Lesser Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila pomarina</i> C. L. Brehm				x									1	25.04.1998
53	Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i> Pallas									x				2	14.09.1993
54	Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8	23.09.1996
55	Red-footed Falcon	<i>Falco vespertinus</i> Linnaeus									x				17	23.09.1996
56	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i> Linnaeus											x		1	23.11.1990
57	Hobby	<i>Falco subbuteo</i> Linnaeus				x		x		x	x				2	25.04.1994
58	Saker Falcon	<i>Falco cherrug</i> Gray	x												1	13.01.1994
59	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i> (Linnaeus)						x							3	04.06.1998
60	Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i> (Linnaeus)			x	x			x	x					3	24.07.1992
61	Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	4	01.06.1998
62	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i> Linnaeus	x		x								x		2	21.01.1995
63	Little Crane	<i>Porzana parva</i> (Scopoli)									x				1	18.09.1991
64	Corncock	<i>Crex crex</i> (Linnaeus)	x												1	12.01.1994
65	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i> (Linnaeus)	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		54	21.08.1993
66	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1628	21.08.1993
67	Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> Linnaeus	x		x	x									29	12.03.1995
68	Black-Winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i> (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x					66	16.06.1994
69	Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		480	23.11.1990
70	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedipnemos</i> (Linnaeus)						x	x	x	x				12	15.09.1993
71	Collared Pratincole	<i>Glareola pratincola</i> (Linnaeus)					x	x	x	x	x				330	19.08.1998
72	Black-winged Pratincole	<i>Glareola nordmanni</i> Nordmann						x	x	x					40	23.08.1996
73	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dupui</i> Scopoli				x	x	x	x	x	x				66	15.09.1993
74	Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> Linnaeus			x	x					x				33	15.09.1993
75	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i> Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				55	19.05.1994
76	Dotterel	<i>Charadrius morinellus</i> Linnaeus			x										1	29.03.1991
77	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> (Linnaeus)	x		x		x				x	x			22	22.01.1991
78	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> (Linnaeus)			x		x		x	x					35	18.09.1991
79	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	153	20.06.1997
80	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i> (Pallas)	x								x				4	21.01.1991
81	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i> (Leisler)				x	x			x	x				500	21.09.1994
82	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i> (Leisler)			x										1	29.03.1991



Nr. crt	ENGLISH	SCIENTIFIC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	MAX. NR	DATE
83	Curlew Sandpiper	Calidris ferruginea (Pontoppidan)			x	x	x			x	x				26	02.08.1992
84	Dunlin	Calidris alpina (Linnaeus)	x		x	x	x	x		x	x				1025	20.03.1991
85	Broad-billed Sandpiper	Limicola falcinellus (Pontoppidan)	x				x				x				28	21.01.1991
86	Ruff	Philomachus pugnax (Linnaeus)			x	x		x	x	x	x				930	29.03.1991
87	Snipe	Gallinago gallinago (Linnaeus)			x	x		x		x	x		x		25	21.09.1992
88	Black-tailed Godwit	Limosa limosa (Linnaeus)			x	x		x	x	x	x		x		10450	29.03.1991
89	Whimbrel	Numenius phaeopus (Linnaeus)			x	x						x			1	22.03.1994
90	Curlew	Numenius arquata (Linnaeus)	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		31	15.09.1993
91	Spotted Redshank	Tringa erythropus (Pallas)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				50	20.05.1997
92	Redshank	Tringa totanus (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		338	16.06.1994
93	Marsh Sandpiper	Tringa stagnatilis (Bechstein)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				75	29.03.1991
94	Greenshank	Tringa nebularia (Gunnerus)			x	x		x		x	x				10	19.04.1996
95	Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				30	25.04.1998
96	Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				102	12.03.1995
97	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos (Linnaeus)					x	x							1	19.04.1996
98	Turnstone	Arenaria interpres (Linnaeus)								x	x				1	19.08.1998
99	Red-necked Phalarope	Phalaropus lobatus (Linnaeus)					x			x	x				14	23.08.1996
100	Grey Phalarope	Phalaropus fulicarius (Linnaeus)								x					5	21.08.1993
101	Little Gull	Larus minutus Pallas			x	x	x	x		x	x		x		1165	23.08.1996
102	Black-headed Gull	Larus ridibundus Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	2364	21.09.1992
103	Common Gull	Larus canus Linnaeus	x										x	x	1280	13.01.1994
104	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Larus fuscus Linnaeus				x					x				10	21.09.1994
105	Yellow-legged Gull	Larus cachinnans Pallas	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	4100	28.09.1998
106	Gull-billed Tern	Gelochelidon nilotica (Gmelin)						x		x	x				14	21.08.1993
107	Caspian Tern	Sterna caspia							x	x	x				103	29.08.1991
108	Sandwich Tern	Sterna sandvicensis Latham								x			x		6	24.11.1990
109	Common Tern	Sterna hurundo Linnaeus				x	x	x	x	x	x		x		50	23.08.1996
110	Little Tern	Sterna albifrons Pallas				x	x	x	x	x	x				13	29.08.1991
111	Whiskered Tern	Chlidonias hybridus (Pallas)					x	x	x	x	x				74	17.09.1991
112	Black Tern	Chlidonias niger (Linnaeus)				x	x	x	x	x	x				10	19.04.1996
113	White-winged Black Tern	Chlidonias leucopterus (Temminck)				x	x	x	x	x	x				33	20.06.1997
114	Woodpigeon	Columba palumbus Linnaeus				x							x		1	22.03.1994
115	Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto (Fridvaldszky)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	19	20.06.1997
116	Cuckoo	Cuculus canorus Linnaeus				x	x	x	x	x					14	02.06.1998
117	Scops Owl	Otus scops (Linnaeus)				x									1	10.03.1995
118	Little Owl	Athene noctua (Scopoli)						x	x	x					2	23.08.1996
119	Long-eared Owl	Asio otus (Linnaeus)					x								1	19.05.1994
120	Swift	Apus apus (Linnaeus)					x	x							10	20.06.1997
121	Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis Linnaeus				x	x	x	x	x	x				2	28.09.1998
122	Bee-eater	Merops apiaster Linnaeus				x	x	x	x	x	x				52	23.08.1996
123	Hoopoe	Upupa epops Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x					11	01.06.1998

Nr. crt	ENGLISH	SCIENTIFIC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	MAX NR	DATE
124	Calandra Lark	Melanocorypha calandra (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x						6	01.06.1998
125	Short-toed Lark	Calandrella brachydactyla (Leisler)						x							1	02.06.1998
126	Crested Lark	Galerida cristata (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10	16.06.1994
127	Sky lark	Alauda arvensis Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		106	19.06.1997
128	Shore Lark	Eremophila alpestris (Linnaeus)			x										2	25.03.1992
129	Sand Martin	Riparia riparia (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				15000	18.08.1998
130	Swallow	Hirundo rustica Linnaeus				x	x	x	x	x	x				1010	28.09.1998
131	House Martin	Delichon urbica (Linnaeus)				x	x	x	x	x					70	02.06.1998
132	Tawny Pipit	Antbus campestris (Linnaeus)					x	x	x	x					12	26.06.1996
133	Blue-headed Wagtail	Motacilla flava flava Linnaeus			x	x	x	x	x	x			x		221	23.08.1996
134	Black-headed Wagtail	Motacilla flava fledge Michahellis			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				40	04.06.1998
135	White Wagtail	Motacilla alba Linnaeus	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		41	05.04.1994
136	Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes (Linnaeus)	x			x					x		x	x	6	23.11.1990
137	Robin	Erithacus rubecula (Linnaeus)				x									2	06.04.1994
138	Thrush Nightingale	Luscinia luscinia (Linnaeus)								x					4	27.08.1991
139	Bluetthroat	Luscinia svedica (Linnaeus)								x	x				1	23.08.1996
140	Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros (Gmelin)			x							x			2	27.10.1993
141	Redstart	Phoenicurus phoenicurus (Linnaeus)			x						x		x		2	26.09.1995
142	Whinchat	Saxicola rubetra (Linnaeus)			x						x				1	26.09.1995
143	Stonechat	Saxicola torquata (Linnaeus)			x					x		x			2	27.10.1993
144	Isabelline Wheatear	Oenanthe isabellina (Temminck)									x				2	14.09.1993
145	Wheatear	Oenanthe oenanthe (Linnaeus)			x	x	x	x	x	x					18	19.08.1998
146	Blackbird	Turdus merula Linnaeus						x					x		2	02.06.1998
147	Song Thrush	Turdus philomelos C L Brehm			x										6	27.03.1993
148	Savi's Warbler	Locustella luscinioides (Salvi)								x					1	29.08.1991
149	Moustached Warbler	Acrocephalus melanopogon (Temminck)								x	x				4	19.08.1992
150	Acquatic Warbler	Acrocephalus paludicola (Vieillot)								x	x				4	18.09.1991
151	Sedge Warbler	Acrocephalus schoenobaenus (Linnaeus)						x	x	x	x				20	24.08.1996
152	Paddyfield Warbler	Acrocephalus agricola (Jerdon)						x	x	x	x				14	27.08.1991
153	Blyth's Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus dumetorum (Blyth)						x		x					1	18.06.1997
154	Marsh Warbler	Acrocephalus palustris (Bechstein)								x	x				4	10.09.1991
155	Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus scirpaceus (Hermann)				x	x	x	x	x	x				45	04.06.1998
156	Great Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus arundinaceus (Linnaeus)				x	x	x	x	x	x				49	04.06.1998
157	Whitethroat	Sylvia communis Latham								x	x				5	23.09.1996
158	Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita (Vieillot)								x	x				2	24.08.1996
159	Willow Warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus (Linnaeus)								x	x				2	28.08.1991
160	Goldcrest	Regulus regulus (Linnaeus)										x			2	27.10.1993
161	Spotted Flycatcher	Muscicapa striata (Pallas)									x				1	28.09.1998
162	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Ficedula parva (Bechstein)								x					2	24.08.1996
163	Collared Flycatcher	Ficedula albicollis (Temminck)				x				x					1	15.08.1990
164	Pied Flycatcher	Ficedula hypoleuca (Pallas)									x				1	14.09.1993

Nr crt	ENGLISH	SCIENTIFIC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	MAX. NR	DATE
165	Bearded Tit	<i>Panurus biarmicus</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		42	02.06.1998
166	Blue Tit	<i>Parus caeruleus</i> Linnaeus	x			x						x	x		6	27.10.1993
167	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i> Linnaeus				x									1	22.04.1993
168	Red-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius collurio</i> Linnaeus					x	x	x	x	x				3	28.09.1998
169	Lesser Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius minor</i> Gmelin					x	x	x	x					7	23.08.1996
170	Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i> Linnaeus								x					5	02.08.1991
171	Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	14	28.03.1991
172	Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	14	24.03.1992
173	Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	436	10.03.1995
174	Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus corone cornix</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	107	11.03.1995
175	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	6000	24.01.1991
176	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100	18.06.1997
177	Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i> (Temminck)								x	x				4	18.09.1991
178	Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	150	21.01.1995
179	Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i> Linnaeus	x	x	x										62	27.03.1993
180	Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i> (Linnaeus)	x									x	x	x	30	27.10.1993
181	Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x	x								x	x	72	24.11.1990
182	Siskin	<i>Carduelis spinus</i> (Linnaeus)											x		12	13.11.1992
183	Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i> (Linnaeus)	x										x	x	80	20.12.1990
184	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniculus</i> (Linnaeus)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	88	21.01.1995
185	Corn Bunting	<i>Miliaria calandra</i> (Linnaeus)	x		x	x	x	x						x	5	12.01.1994

## OBSERVATIONS FROM HMS YORK IN THE GULF - 1998

After whetting my appetite for witnessing landbird migration at sea in the Autumn of 1997 (*Sea Swallow* 47), I was fortunate enough to be able to observe both passage periods of 1998 while *HMS York* was on Armilla Patrol. The ship was in the Gulf for the majority of both migration periods. We left Portsmouth on 5 March and before Gibraltar we had a female Redstart on board and a single House Martin and Swallow spent the night of the 8th in the hangar, no doubt happy for the rest but not the direction they were now cruising. Needless to say when the main door was opened the following morning the pair were quickly back on course. The Mediterranean was relatively quiet until we left Crete for Suez, and on the afternoon of the 13th a pair of Red-rumped Swallows flew alongside the ship and a male Isabelline Wheatear showed well on the funnel. The usual birds of the area were seen as we transited South through the Suez and a low flying Short-toed Eagle was a bonus as it flew north-east into the Sinai Peninsula. Choppy weather and high winds put paid to much viewing until we arrived in the Gulf itself on the 22nd of the month. After a visit to Jebel Ali where I managed to bird the hotel and the Emirates Golf Club both of which were excellent, the ship began operations in the Northern Gulf. On 22 April the ship was alive with insects particularly small moths and dragonflies and the birds came in for easy pickings. A pair of Redstarts, three Yellow Wagtails (feldegg race) and singles of Willow Warbler and a Chiffchaff spent a good period feeding. In the afternoon I was called by the flight to see 'a big pale bird on the flight deck'. When I arrived I was more than happy to see my first Hoopoe Lark. Three possible Cinerous Buntings were located next as they fed adjacent to the Stbd Phalanx. On the night of the 24th I was enjoying a quiet drink in the mess when I received the message of 'a little brown bird on the quarterdeck'. I ambled down expecting to find a Sparrow or suchlike and was therefore very happy when I came across a Spotted Crake sat up in the deckhead support. Apparently oblivious to the crown below it roosted the night away and I assume flew off at first light into the nearby Emirates. On 1 May 'a brown hawk in the hangar' was reported down by the flight. As usual I duly made my entrance a few minutes later to be welcomed by a Eurasian Nightjar roosting out the day in the back of the hangar. Two days later a pair of Whitethroats were feeding on the insects around the upperdeck and an Oliveaceous Warbler spent the night in the hangar. Another Hoopoe Lark was on board on the 4th and later that day a male Isabelline Shrike was perched on the funnel guard-rail flying down to the deck to pick up various insects before returning with it to the same spot rather like a Flycatcher. A rather unwelcome sight was discovered on the 6th when I found a dead female Redstart and a Marsh Warbler, both were stuck to an air inlet grill by their wings, a second Marsh Warbler was removed but died a few hours later. A happier highlight of today was an Ortolan Bunting feeding on the stbd waste. A Palm Dove perched on a guard-rail and was the next species, on 15 May, and another Eurasian Nightjar was also seen later that day.

The ship headed east for the next few months and I had some excellent birding in Singapore, Malaysia and Japan including visits to Sungei Buloh NR, Taman Negara and the Fuji foothills respectively.

We returned to the Gulf in early August, and on the 12th a Great Grey Shrike spent an hour perched on the funnel guard-rail, quite oblivious to the club swingers circuit. A Sand Plover was on board on 27 August and I must admit to not being certain if it was a Lesser or Greater. Hoopoes were present daily from the end of the month and every day people came to me describing the sighting of a fancy bird with black and white wings, a curved bill, and a mohican in one case! A juvenile Citrine Wagtail (identification 95% certain) was on board on 2 September and on the 3rd three Kestrels flew over followed by three Sand Martins which



proceeded to hawk insects over the f'csl for a few minutes. A non-breeding plumaged Turnstone joined us on the f'csl about 10 minutes later, along with another juvenile Citrine.

A day later we had another Kestrel over fly us in the early evening and a few minutes later a flock of approximately 100 Bee-eaters flew noisily over and away into the night. From the size I would guess at Blue Cheeked but no positive ID could be made.

We then had three cracking sightings on consecutive days. On 18 September a juvenile Sparrow-hawk showed well perched on the Seadart Launcher it was followed on the 19th by a Scops Owl roosting away the day inside the port Phalanx Mounting. A day later a superb looking Hobby spent 20 minutes perched on the 4.5 Turret. Over the next week we had daily sightings of Sand Martins and Swallows passing the ship. The ship commenced its return passage to Portsmouth in early October and events quietened down until we transited the Gulf of Aden on 6 October when I had what could be described as my best on board birding day of the deployment. Early in the morning the ship was rassing and I was on the upper deck to see what was about. Immediately I could see four House Crows over in the Brambleleafs rigging and among them a single Kestrel. A Tree Pipit rested on our f'csl and I thought I could see a Palm Dove in among the fuel pipes on the tankers deck. After putting the binoculars on it, I was delighted to see a Bruce's Yellow Bellied Pigeon, which during the refuelling flew over and landed on the hangar roof giving very good views. A single Hoopoe could also be seen fitting between the two ships. Later in the afternoon I came across a single Nightjar roosting on the barrel of a 20mm Gambo and three unidentified Wheaters flew in hunt of the bow and disappeared towards the African mainland which was clearly visible to port, as was the Arabian Peninsular to starboard. A group of Swallows spent about 10 minutes off the back of the ship and among them was a single Little Swift. Half an hour later two Great Egrets flew over heading South, by this time the earlier Kestrel had also joined us and the ships co. were treated to good views as it swooped on passing migrants. Having found the remains of a Tree Pipit on the Scot Deck I presume that it was successful. The last bird of the day was an Olivaceous Warbler perched on a f'csl guard-rail.

The highlight of the North Bound Red Sea transit was a male Blackcap perched on hangar roof on 8 October, nearby was a deep pink coloured Palm Dove. The return passage through the Mediterranean was a little more productive than the outbound. On the 12th a Spotted Flycatcher was on the hangar roof, adjacent to it was a very bright coloured Willow Warbler or could it have been a Wood Warbler? Later the same day another Nightjar was observed roosting on one of the magazine lockers. On 15 October a Song Thrush was inside the hangar and the ship seemed to be full of Robins, around 20 birds were observed. Three winter plumaged Starlings were next to pay us a visit and a female flew down the stbd waste with a Chiffchaff in tow. The last bird to be seen for the trip was a female Chaffinch which paid a visit early morning on the 16th before flying off.

PO S Copsey  
HMS York

Editor's comment: This is an example of a non-scientific article that can be written by anybody at sea. The specific detail of the sightings can be found within the Landbird analysis.

AN ARABIAN GULF VOYAGE ON BOARD THE MS CALEDONIAN  
STAR 30 NOVEMBER-17 DECEMBER 1995



On board *Caledonian Star* at Musandam.

Photo: C Richardson

During the latter part of 1995 I was invited to join the educational cruise ship MS *Caledonian Star* on two winter cruises between Muscat and Kuwait, calling at several Arabian Gulf ports. The 100 or so passengers were American nationals travelling under the auspices of the Stanford University Alumni Association and the American Museum of Natural History, keen to experience the culture of Arabia at first hand. They were accompanied on board by a team of experts on the archaeology, history, culture and wildlife of Arabia. My role was as ornithological advisor and I was to present two short lectures to the passengers on general aspects of the birds of Arabia. Apart from the distractions of lectures and meals, I spent each moment at sea on the outer reaches of the bridge with binoculars at the ready!

I joined the ship at Mina Qaboos, the main sea port of Mattrah, near Muscat, the capital of Oman, on the afternoon of 30 November 1995. After noting a number of birds in the harbour, including an **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* about a hundred **Sooty Gulls** *Larus hemprichi* and a similar number of **Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ridibundus* and 50 **Common Terns** *Sterna hirundo*, I boarded the ship and we sailed shortly after dark.

At first light, around 6.30 on 1 December, I came on deck to find the surrounding seas full of activity. The sky was clear and the temperature was about 25°C. I noted our position as 25° 04'N, 57°E. We were at the apex of the Gulf of Oman and the depth-gauge on the bridge measured approximately 1,000 metres to the sea-bed, but it was rising fast. In fact within a few minutes we had reached the edge of the continental shelf and the depth had reduced to only 108 metres. During this short space of time I watched hundreds of pelagic seabirds, including one or two **Jouanin's Petrels** *Bulweria fallax*, a hundred **Persian Shearwaters** *Puffinus persicus*,

sixty **Pale-footed Shearwaters** *Puffinus carneipes*, two **Masked Boobies** *Sula dactylatra* and thirty five **Red-necked Phalaropes** *Phalaropus lobatus* feeding on the plankton and other invertebrates rising to the surface from the steep face of the continental shelf. There were a small number of **Wedge-tailed Shearwaters** *Puffinus pacificus*, too (in truth I found them rather difficult to separate from Pale-footed Shearwater), plus about ten medium-sized *Sterna* terns and two **Swift (Greater Crested) Terns** *Sterna bergii*. Also in the fray, about two hundred dolphins, many of which I put down as 'Common', as they appeared to have an hourglass pattern on their flanks. This was a wonderful experience for me and I was rewarded again at 8.20 when two more **Masked Boobies** and 50 **Red-necked Phalaropes** appeared at 25° 21'N, 56° 43'E, 12nm east of the United Arab Emirates coastline. The boobies have since been accepted by the Emirates Bird Records Committee as the 4th record of the species in the UAE.

There was little of further interest to see that morning and after an afternoon of leisure and watching tribal dancing, hosted by the villagers of the eastern coast of the Musandam (Oman), we set sail again and the Strait of Hormuz was negotiated in darkness. We entered the Arabian Gulf in the early hours of the morning and by dawn we were sailing close to shore, before arriving at Port Rashid in Dubai on the morning of 2 December.

I rejoined the ship on 10 December at Kuwait. We sailed southwards out of Kuwait around 13.00h under a clearing sky and the only birds seen during our voyage to Bahrain were a dozen Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis* in the outer approaches of the Kuwait harbour channel and a scattering of about 20 Yellow-legged Gulls of the nominate race *Larus (c.) cachimans* - sometimes treated as a distinct species **Caspian** or **Pontic Gull**, identified by the greater extent



East Coast of Musandam  
Photo: C Richardson



Umm Fayyarin, Strait of Hormaz.

Photo: C Richardson

of white on the wingtip - and Black-headed Gulls at 26°-35'N, 50° 52'E, as we approached Bahrain territorial waters.

After an onshore trip round Bahrain, we travelled overland by coach from Bahrain to Qatar, via Saudi Arabia. This in itself was a unique experience, as there have been few (if any) mixed male and female tour groups allowed to travel by land through Saudi Arabia. It seems special permission had been granted through American diplomatic channels. We rejoined the ship at Doha Port and sailed for Dubai on the evening of the 13th. This was frustrating that we should again be sailing at night through interesting waters, but since my priorities were different from most of the participants, organisers and crew on board, I had to bear with it! A dawn watch from the bridge on the 14th saw us approaching Sir Abu Nu'air Island. There were a few seabirds around the island, including notably about 50 Sooty Gulls - this was interesting for me because this species is virtually absent in UAE inshore waters in winter and their movements are not well documented outside the breeding season. There were also over two hundred Sandwich Terns diving around the island, confirming the species as the most common tern seen at sea during the voyage.

A day was spent sightseeing and bird watching in Dubai, before we weighed anchor and left Dubai's Port Rashid on the evening of 15 December. The following day broke revealing a dramatic seascape of deep fjords, flanked by steep, high mountains. This was Khawrash Shamm (Oman), the largest inlet adjacent to Khasab, the main port and capital of the Governorate of Musandam. To the north of the khawr the Musandam Peninsula rose starkly out of the sea, providing few opportunities for even a boat to land safely. As we sailed among the towering peaks I watched 2000 or more **Socotra Cormorants** *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* swimming and diving around the ship, attended by at least six hopeful **Great Black-headed Gulls** *Larus ichthyæetus*. Later in the day as we headed for the Arabian Sea we passed through the Strait of Hormuz in daylight. Six miles north of the island of Great Quoin (As Salamah)



there were two immature **Sooty Terns** *Sterna fuscata*, followed shortly after at 26° 31' N 56° 24' E, by 19 Persian Shearwaters, a dark-phase **Pomarine Skua** *Stereorarius pomarinus* and an immature **Bridled Tern** *Sterna anaethetus*. Our interim destination was Jazirat Umm al Fayyarin, a sloping island crag with a thriving summer tern colony, about 3 nm off the east coast of Musandam. This and adjacent rocky islets also support small breeding populations of some of the world's most desirable birds, including over 20 pairs of **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* and at least two pairs of **Sooty Falcon** *Falco concolor*. But after circling the island twice on a rather rain swept evening, finding only two pairs of **Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus*, we continued our overnight journey to Muscat.

From dawn on the morning of the 17th during the final 12 nm to Muscat, I saw at least six Jouanin's Petrels, three Persian Shearwaters, a Masked Booby, 13 Red-necked Phalaropes and selection of gulls passing the ship. One of the last and most interesting sightings was of an unidentified **Storm-petrel** at 23° 50' N, 58° 25' E, within only 2 nm of Mina Qaboos.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Bill Bourne for encouraging me to submit this for publication and for his subsequent helpful comments on my manuscript. I would like to thank Michael Gallagher, the former Curator of the Oman Natural History Museum, for his expert advice on zoological and geographical aspects of the penultimate version of this article.

Last but not least I am very grateful to Peter Vole for giving me the opportunity to take part in these trips which were his brainchild.

Colin Richardson, P.O. Box 50394, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Approaching Umm Fayyarin.  
Photo: C Richardson

## THE SEABIRD BIBLIOGRAPHIC NIGHTMARE

by Dr WRP Bourne

Seabird publications used to be so simple - there were none, so anyone who had anything to say had to send it elsewhere, to be edited, printed and circulated by someone else who probably knew little about the subject, so that it took low priority. In consequence much important early material, for example from Captain Cook's voyage, either did not achieve publication for many years, or appeared in strange places, such as JR Forster's early descriptions of the albatrosses in a French mathematical and physical journal, where they were long overlooked.

*Sea Swallow* was founded in 1947, therefore has the dubious distinction of being the senior marine ornithological journal, and has usually obeyed the main bibliographic rules, appearing regularly under the same name in the same format though it has missed four numbers in 50 years, something which could have been avoided by producing 'double numbers' when one was missed, and it recently changed its cover and shape slightly. Some of the growing number of contemporaries do not have such a good record.

To start with the first, the Seabird Group (c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL, UK) first produced a duplicated foolscap *Seabird Bulletin* at intervals of months in 1965, changed after six numbers to a smaller annual *Seabird Report* and Irregular *Newsletters* in 1970. Then after producing only six *Reports* over 12 years it renamed them *Seabird* 1984, and has now after 20 numbers combined this with the rather good quarterly *Sula* founded in 1987 by the Nederlandse Zeevogelgroep (c/o De Houtmanstraat 46, 1792 BC Oudeschild, Texel, The Netherlands), replacing them with a new academic quarterly in their format renamed *Atlantic Seabirds* (presumably in imitation of the Pacific publication discussed below in 1999).

Among more other seabird group activities than I can keep track of it may also be useful to note the progress of the following publications:

The Australasian Seabird Group (c/o Birds Australia, 415 Riversdale Rd., Hawthorne East, Victoria 3123, Australia)- a duplicated A4 *Newsletter* with much original material since 1972 now revived after a gap.

The Pacific Seabird Group (Box 1791/4505 University Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105, USA)- a similar six monthly *Bulletin* since 1974, dealing mainly with local business, including numerous important abstracts of contributions to its major annual conferences and some other articles, renamed *Pacific Seabirds* without a change of style in 1994.

The African Seabird Group (PO Box 34113, Rhodes Gift 7707, South Africa) - first a very useful small biennial journal, *Cormorant* from 1976, enlarged into a glossy academic publication, *Marine Ornithology* in 1990, which has not yet got beyond the numbers for 1995, circulated last year.

Medmaravis (the Mediterranean Seabird Group, BP2, 83470 Saint Maximin, France)- a duplicated A4 *Medmaravis News* at intervals with massive, expensive 'scientific' proceedings of its periodic major conferences produced in differing styles after a varying period by their local organisers.

The North Sea Bird Club (c/o Culterty Field Station, University of Aberdeen, Newburgh, Ellon, Aberdeenshire AB41 0AA, UK), which collects observations from the British offshore oil installations - an *Annual Report* summarising observations since 1982, with the years sometimes combined, originally A4 but cut by half from 1985, and a quarterly A4 bulletin *The Fulmar*.

In addition to these more or less regular and uniform publications, which must already cause a headache for librarians, and other often well edited proceedings of meetings (which we have

sometimes reviewed) there has been a growing torrent of usually verbose departmental 'gray literature' of varying quality produced by official and voluntary bodies mainly in Europe and North America forming an impenetrable jungle for those who lack access to a good library. Thus for example the Outer Continental Shelf Environmental Assessment Program (OCSEAP) in Alaska produced a huge stack of reports, the JNCC Seabirds at Sea team in Britain has produced a good many, and there have been numerous publications from the Antarctic, listed in *Marine Ornithology*. There is a growing need for all this material to be reviewed critically and reduced to book form, in the way that RC Murphy once did for the *Oceanic Birds of South America* (New York, 1936). Unfortunately nobody ever seems to award adequate grants to anyone working on a masterpiece.

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## EARLY OBSERVATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Reproduced from *Tidemarks: some records of a journey to the beaches of the Moluccas and the Forest Malaya*, in 1923 by H M Tomlinson, Cassell, London, 1924)

June 10 - We are nearing the Laccadives. A dragon-fly passed over the ship on the wind. The wind is south-west, and the nearest land in that direction is Africa, over one thousand miles away. Some day a sailor who has a taste for natural history will give us the records of his voyages, and his notes may surprise the ornithologists, at least. Our men caught a merlin in the the Red Sea, which was quite friendly, and took its own time to depart when it was released. Another day, while in the same waters, I was looking at a group of Chinese firemen sprawled on the after-hatch and was wondering where in England a change group of workers could be found to match those models, when a ray of coloured light flashed over them and focused on a davit. It was an unfamiliar bird, and I began to stalk it with binoculars while it changed its perches about the poop, till it was made out to be a Bee-eater. Then I found the chief mate was behind me, intent also with his binoculars. We had some bickering about it. He said the bird was a roller; but I told him he should stick to his chipping hammer and leave the birds to better men. He said he would soon show me who was the better man, and escorted me the length of the ship to his cabin, where he produced a bird book, which was a log of several long voyages to the Far East. Like so many sailors today, he is versed in several matters which we landsmen think are certainly not the business of sailors at all. He has been keeping a log of the land-birds which he has recognised at sea, and his record suggested what an excellent book a sailor who is also a naturalist may write for us some day.

This sailor had observed for himself, what naturalists know well enough, that the gulls are not sea-birds at all in the sense that are albatrosses and petrels, and the frigate and bo'sun birds of the tropics. When you see gulls, then land is near, though dirty weather may hide it. The herring gulls, kittiwakes, and black-backs never follow a ship to blue water. When, outward bound, land dissolves astern, then they too leave you. You may meet their fellows again off Ushant or Finisterre if your ship passes not too far from the land; but should you be well to the westward, then the ship's next visitor will be land-birds when approaching Gibraltar.

Serveral pairs of noddies kept about the ship at the lower end of the Red Sea, and not because of anything we could give them except our society. They did not beg astern, like hungry gulls, for scraps, but wheeled about the bows, or manoeuvred close abeam like swallows at play. As a fact, I think they were tired and wanted to rest. Once or twice they alighted on our bulwarks and went through some astonishing aerial acrobatics while their tiny webbed feet sought the awkward perch.

After sundown one acutally tried to alight on my head, while I stood in the dusk on the captains's bridge watching its evolutions. It swerved and stooped so unexpectedly that I ducked, as one used to at the sound of a shell going over. But soon it alighted behind me, and it made no more fuss about being picked up than though it were a rag. It was only a little sick, but got over that, and settled down on the palm of my hand. A group of shipmates were overworking a gramophone below on a hatch, where lamps made the deck bright. Down went the noddy and I to them. Our visitor cocked an eye at the gramophone and took quiet stock of the men who came round to stroke it. It accepted us all as quietly as though it had known us for years and this was the usual routine. It heard its mate later, or else our musical records were not to its taste, for it shook itself disconsolately, waddled a little and projected itself into the night.



Last night the surgeon brought to my cabin another visitor. It was a petrel, about the size of a blackbird, and of a uniform dark chocolate colour. We judged it was uncommon, and there was a brief hint of chloroform, which was immediately dismissed, for our captain might have objected to any modern version of the Ancient Mariner's crime on his ship, even in the name of science. We enjoyed our guest in life till it was pleased to leave us\*.

June 11 - The south end of Ceylon was in sight 20 miles distant on the port bow at 2pm.

\* Later, Mr Moulton, of the Raffles Museum at Singapore, showed me a rarity, one of the six specimens taken from Swinhoe's Fork-tailed Petrel. Our little friend of the Indian Ocean was at once recognized and named, and his visit to our liner added something new to our knowledge of his kind, for it was unknown that he was likely to be found so far to the westward.

(Supplied by Michael P Walters. It is a pity no more details were recorded about what would be the first Swinhoe's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma monorhis* for the Arabian Sea, since there is a possibility of confusion with Matsudaira's Storm-petrel *O. matsudairae*, which had not been described then. WRPB).

## **BIRDS ATTRACTED BY LIGHTS AND KILLED BY SKUAS ON GOUGH ISLAND, SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN, AND THEIR ZONAL AFFINITIES**

by Dr WRP Bourne



RSA and Gough Island.  
Photo: Dr W R P Bourne

One of the worst problems in marine ornithology is to locate, identify and count the scarcer species visiting large seabird colonies with difficult terrain in remote places. This especially

applies to some of the smaller petrels and alcid which breed in holes and come and go by night. Much useful information about the few smaller birds surviving on devastated Macquarie Island was obtained by Jones (1980) from examination of remains left by predators. Swales (1965) and Shaughnessy and Fairall (1976) have already reported on the birds coming to lights at night, and Voisin (1979) on the distribution of remains left by Subantarctic Skuas *Catharacta (skuas) hamiltoni* at the huge, comparatively undisturbed seabird colony providing breeding-places for a large proportion of the seabirds of the temperate South Atlantic on mountainous Gough Island (40° 21'S 9° 53'W).

During the annual visit of a party organised by the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, during 30 October-12 November 1979 (Bourne 1980, summarised in Clancey 1981 and Williams and Imber 1982) I noted the birds coming to lights on misty nights at sea-level at the old base in Glen Bay (Holdgate 1958), and the new one at Gough House on the southern slopes, and the recognisable remains at skua feeding-places or 'middens' wherever I encountered them during roughly comparable periods spent at different altitudes inland. While this failed to reveal any novelties (Table 1), there are some results of interest.



Skua sp. on Gough Island. Photo: Dr W R P Bourne

In the first place, little evidence was found for mortality at the breeding places of the larger seabirds, including the penguins, albatrosses and giant petrels, except for one dead young Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*. Old remains were found of a few Grey Petrels *Procellaria cinerea* which had finished breeding; and some Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis*, which were just starting to lay, were seen, and Elliot (1969) reports more predation on their fledging young in May. The main visible mortality involved the medium-sized petrels, including the Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptila vittata* at all levels, the Little Shearwater *Puffinus assimilis* and Common Diving-petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix* lower down, most of the gadfly petrels *Pterodroma* sp on the middle slopes, and the Grey and Kerguelen Petrels *Lugensa brevirostris* in the hills.

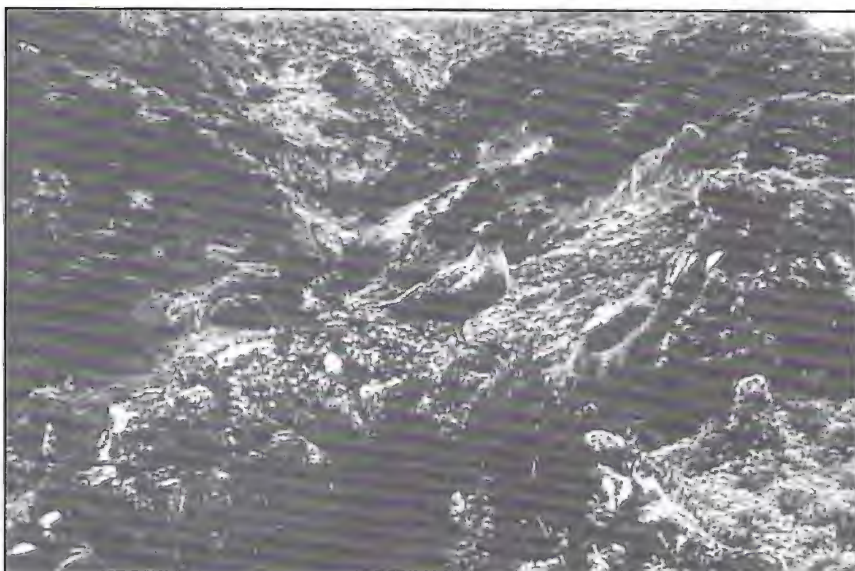
There were unexpectedly few records of the small storm-petrels, said to occur in thousands

offshore (Richardson 1984), though I did not see many there (Bourne 1992). While they might be swallowed whole by the skuas, where they are taken by gulls on St Kilda their bones are present in their regurgitated castings, and should also have been present in the skua castings on Gough Island. Swales (1965) also found them scarce in the Glen, though he caught 24 *Fregettas* at night, and speculated that White-faced Storm-petrels *Pelagodroma marina* may breed in the cliffs. Shaughnessy and Fairall (1976) also saw few at Gough House. Apparently they are more conspicuous on rodent-free Inaccessible Island (Fraser *et al* 1988), and it seems possible they have become reduced and restricted to inaccessible sites and offshore islets by predation on their eggs and young by the abundant House Mice *Mus musculus* introduced long ago by sealers. These must also have nibbled a number of eggshells of the larger petrels, and may also be taking the seed of the Island Tree *Phylica arborea* (Ryan *et al* 1989). Some taxonomic comments by Clancey (1981), sometimes quoting my unpublished notes (Bourne 1980), seem questionable. Thus the dark form of the Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis* in by no means confined to the Indian Ocean but has also been found at high levels on Tristan da Cunha (Elliot 1954, Bourne 1983; specimens in the Natural History Museum). I have never entertained the view that Tristan-Gough (Broad-billed Prions) might be recognisable as *Pachyptila vittata keyteli*, but also dismissed the idea. I was not measuring Grey-backed Storm-petrels *Garrodia nereis* from other breeding stations, and his specimen of White-bellied Storm-petrel *Freggetta grallaria leucogaster* like one caught at a high altitude in Gonydale in 1979, may fall within my definition of the pale-bellied form of Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Freggetta tropica melanoleuca* (Bourne 1962), though I also suggested that these may sometimes hybridise in this area (Bourne 1980). Thus it seems possible that there may be some altitudinal separation of seabirds breeding in the Tristan-Gough Group comparable to that found in different climatic zones at sea, birds with subtropical affinities, such as the Great-winged *Pterodroma macroptera*, Atlantic *P. incerta* and pale soft-plumaged Petrels, Great and Little Shearwaters, Common Diving-petrel and White-faced and White-bellied Storm-petrels nesting at lower levels, and those with subantarctic affinities, such as the Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*, Kerguelen and Grey



Middle Slopes and offshore islet. Photo: Dr W R P Bourne.





Skua on hidden middle slopes.

Photo: Dr W R P Bourne.

Petrels, dark Soft-plumaged Petrel, and Black-bellied Storm-petrel, higher up. It also seems possible House Mice have caused more harm, to the smaller petrels than has yet been recognised.

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Skua Midden. Photo: Dr W R P Bourne.

# *Sea Swallow* 48 (1999)

Table 1. Birds attracted by lights and killed by skuas on Gough Island.

Place	The Glen			Gough House		Southern Slopes			Gondale
Altitude	2	2	2	100	100	100	200	500	500
in metres						-200	-500	-700	-700
Date	1955-56	9.11	9-11.11	25.10	12.11	6.11	2.11	2.11	8.11
Light/skua midden	L	L	M	L	LM	M	M	M	M
<b>Great-winged Petrel <i>Pterodroma macroptera</i></b>									
	8	1	1						
<b>Atlantic Petrel <i>Pterodroma incerta</i></b>									
	54	1		2	10	15	2		
<b>Soft-plumaged Petrel <i>Pterodroma mollis</i></b>									
	147	1	19	5	44	78	22		
<b>Kerguelen Petrel <i>Lugensa brevirostris</i></b>									
	136			5	6	1	1	11	4
<b>Broad-billed Prion <i>Pachyptila vittata</i></b>									
	128	5	8	49	54	17	19	18	12
<b>Grey Petrel <i>Procellaria cinerea</i></b>									
	4								3
<b>Great Shearwater <i>Puffinus gravis</i></b>									
	1				(2)				
<b>Little Shearwater <i>Puffinus assimilis</i></b>									
	94	4	19	1	4				
<b>Common Diving-petrel <i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i></b>									
	107	10		27	3	1			
<b>White-faced Storm-petrel <i>Pterodroma marina</i></b>									
	1			1	(1)				
<b>Grey-backed Storm-petrel <i>Garrodia nereis</i></b>									
	15								
<b>Storm-petrel <i>Fregetta</i> sp</b>									
	25				(1)				(1)
<b>Gough Gallinule <i>Gallinula comeri</i></b>									
					2				
<b>Total</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>

Observations at the Glen in 1955-56 from Swales (1965), at Gough House in October 1973 from Shaughnessy and Fairhall (1967) and the rest in 1979, birds in brackets only seen or reported. The surveys of skua middens took comparable periods moving uphill inland, and it could be seen that the Great-winged Petrels were actually visiting the middle slopes.

## **HISTORY OF THE GREAT AUK**

Fuller, Errol, 1998. *The Great Auk* Pp. 448, 205 colour and 225 black and white illustrations, limited edition of 450 copies, 1999. ISBN 0 9533553.

Published by the author, The Great Auk Project, 65 Springfield Road, Southborough, Kent, England RH4 ORD. £385 (\$620).

During the second half of the 19th century the greatest British ornithologist of the day, Alfred Newton, intended to produce a definitive account of the loss of the only recently extinct British bird, the Great Auk *Pinguinus impennis* but failed to complete it. This has now been made a labour of love by Errol Fuller, who like Audubon in order to illustrate it as he wished had to publish it himself. The most important components are meticulously updated lists of the 78 surviving and two destroyed skins, and 69 located, six missing and two destroyed eggs, with copious figures of the specimens and people concerned, which together form an impressive social and artistic document. There is also some vaguer general material, though little about the substantial historical and growing archaeological information on the species. It is interesting that the missing bird in winter plumage from the Leverian Museum in London may still survive in Copenhagen, but doubtful if, as attributed to me, some of the birds may have been young, in which case auks normally have smaller bills; on the other hand, I was wrong to suggest that John Hunter might have collected eggs in Canada when he actually went to France. Until now the maximum sum made out of the Great Auk appears to be £30,000 paid for transferring a skin from Durham to Glasgow (RA Baker, *Archives of Natural History* 26:113-119), but by the time of publication there were orders for 141 copies of this work worth £54,285, which as usual with bird books has apparently barely covered its production costs, though if all were sold they would fetch £173,250.

**WRPB**

## **THE COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF THE WORLD**

Westoll, Tim 1998 Pp: 367 plates in full colour 230 x 154mm hardcover + 32 colour plates.

ISBN 0, 9533367 0 0 £39.99. Glinger Publications, Carlisle. Available from: Carole Green Publishing, 2-4 Station Road, Swavesey, Cambridge BB4 5QJ

This is a truly remarkable book, and a stupendous achievement, in the tradition of the great amateur works of its kind, such as Gilbert White in the 18th century. Now that I am retired from active sea-going, and spend much time as an armchair critic and analyser of RNBWS landbird records from all over the world, I have longed for a book showing what many of these birds look like. My library is full of numerous fieldguides, covering most parts of the world, but these do not include South America. Recent records from the South Atlantic have often included species, strange to me, and Dave Simpson's reports of his birding trips to unfamiliar islands in the Far East, have often had me floundering with the correct spelling of their Latin names. This book, attempts to solve both my problems, so I was delighted when Rear Admiral Mike Harris presented a copy to RNBWS, and asked me to review it.

James Westoll, as he was born, (1918) but universally known from childhood as Tim, came from a Sunderland shipping family, with an extensive farming estate in Cumberland, around

the Solway Firth, where from an early age he learned to observe birds in their native habitat, and to paint them in watercolour. His life-long interest in birds took him all over the world, and the plethora of local fieldguides led him into the idea of producing, within one cover, a checklist for every one of the world's 10,300 species. The impetus for this project was stimulated by a holiday to the Seychelles in the 1970s, where he found there was no guide for the birds of the area, and for the past nearly 30 years the production of this book became his all-consuming task.

He suffered many setbacks in the course of this mammoth project, with the publication of new checklist. Having started with Peter's *Birds of the World*, three new checklists appeared in 1980-81 by Walters Clements, and Howard & Moore - the last-named listed every species and sub-species totalling about 40,000. It was clearly impracticable to illustrate sub-species, but just as he was approaching the end, there appeared *Distribution and taxonomy of Birds of the World* by Sibley Monroe, which added over 100 'new' species. This forced him into making many revisions.

His aim was to produce something which was neither too large, nor too costly for the amateur bird enthusiast - his target was about £40 and he founded his own company, Glinger Publications, to publish it. He triumphantly achieved both these targets, just in time - he sadly died on 7 February 1999, but proud in the knowledge that his *magnum opus* had finally been published.

The result is a treasure-trove of information, which I am already finding most useful. But there are difficulties: the coloured illustrations are no more than 'thumb-nails sketches', and about thumb-nail size (or smaller) - with sometimes as many as 80 on one plate, they could hardly be any larger. Plate 309, for example shows illustrations of 41 species (both male and female) of very similar looking *Emberizidae* 'Seed eaters'. The book does not aim to be an identification guide - one must still refer to a fieldguide for such detail - but it does suggest where doubtful descriptions may be confused with another similar species.

The index is also difficult to use: Latin names only are listed, and one has to know at least the family name, in order to find what one is looking for. And, alas, there are a number of unfortunate misprints - as an editor, I know only too well the practical difficulties of proof-reading, and for a book of this complexity, errors are inevitable. But, if one uses this book in order to check the spelling of an unfamiliar Latin name, then mis-prints add to the confusion. To give one example: I needed to check 'Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*' (for table J of the landbird analysis), and found that the Tyrant Flycatchers (Family 107) *Tyrannidae* comprises 408 species, shown on 10 plates (196-205), and the subject of my enquiry is shown (as no. 79) on plate 198, but is mis-spelt *sanana*. I fear there must be many other errors, but I do not envy anyone the task of correcting them.

It is invidious to appear critical; this book is a monumental achievement, and will find good use as a book of reference in a bookshelf at home, but it will not replace the many smaller fieldguides. Weighing 1.5 Kg (3.25 lbs) it is rather heavy to carry on trips abroad. But at £39.99 (£3.50 p&p), it is good value.

MBC



OBITUARIES

**Roger Samuel Bailey, 1940-1999**

Roger Bailey was one of the best ornithologists of his generation, who attracted little attention because he was a quiet, modest, wise, industrious, religious, musical, well-read, friendly and helpful person, who provided the first vital, but unrecognised link between two sciences, ornithology and fisheries biology. Educated at King Edward's School Birmingham where his family had a business, he secured a Demi-scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford. An active ornithologist, he took part there in several expeditions, notably to northern Scandinavia and the southern Caspian Sea. For his doctorate at the Edward Grey Institute he studied the birds during the International Indian Ocean Expedition of the 1960s (*Sea Swallow* 17: 51-56), and then worked with Kenneth Williamson at the British Trust for Ornithology on the Common Bird Census where he met his formidable wife, Jane Selwyn.

In 1968 he joined the DAFS Marine Laboratory at Aberdeen to work on industrial fisheries. Here he pioneered the ageing and counting of otoliths to assess fish populations, also assisting the growing number of people working on birds at sea at Aberdeen. From 1976 he served on, and sometimes chaired, ten fish working groups, and in 1993 moved on to one of the four top posts, Fisheries Adviser, at the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) in Copenhagen, while also remaining on unusually good terms with the fishing industry. In 1991-92 he was made an Honorary Professor by the Buckland Foundation, for whom he gave three lectures on the relationship between seabirds and fish, and the resulting book is now being completed by Rob Stevenson in Canada. A devoted family man with many friends, in addition to Jane he leaves two sons and a daughter.

**WRPB**

**Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Leofric Boyle, OBE, 1899-1999**

When I was a young medical student in London becoming interested in seabirds in the early 1950s I chanced to meet the charming, modest and urbane Secretary of what was then called the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire at a meeting at the London Zoo. He proved to have a vast series of notes of birds seen while he was in charge of troops being repatriated by sea to West Africa and the Indian Ocean after World War II, and was kind enough to allow me to go through them. While unfortunately he had been unable to record positions, they provided an invaluable background for subsequent more precise observations. I did not realise then that he had already had an interesting service career (*Times* 2 April; see also a subsequent letter reporting how he interested people in birdwatching on troopships). He later quietly but determinedly transformed his tinpot organisation in a field previously delegated to old ladies into the major force that Fauna and Flora International and its Journal *Oryx* have become in conservation today. He deserves recognition as both a pioneer Service birdwatcher, and one of the founders of modern conservation.

**WRPB**

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## INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Interested persons are invited to submit contributions for *Sea Swallow*; authors do not need to be RNBWS members. Material may take the form of papers, notes, progress reports, letters or reviews.

The style used in *Sea Swallow* should be followed, with the standard abbreviations, nomenclature and use of references.

Manuscripts should ideally be typed in double spacing, together with figures and diagrams. Accompanying photographs are preferred as prints rather than slides. Those with facilities to do so are encouraged to send on IBM PC compatible 3.5" disc (specifying the word processing software used), together with a hard any print. ASCII back-up text is also desirable.

Contributions are welcome at any time, but if for inclusion in the next edition must reach the editor by 31st May.





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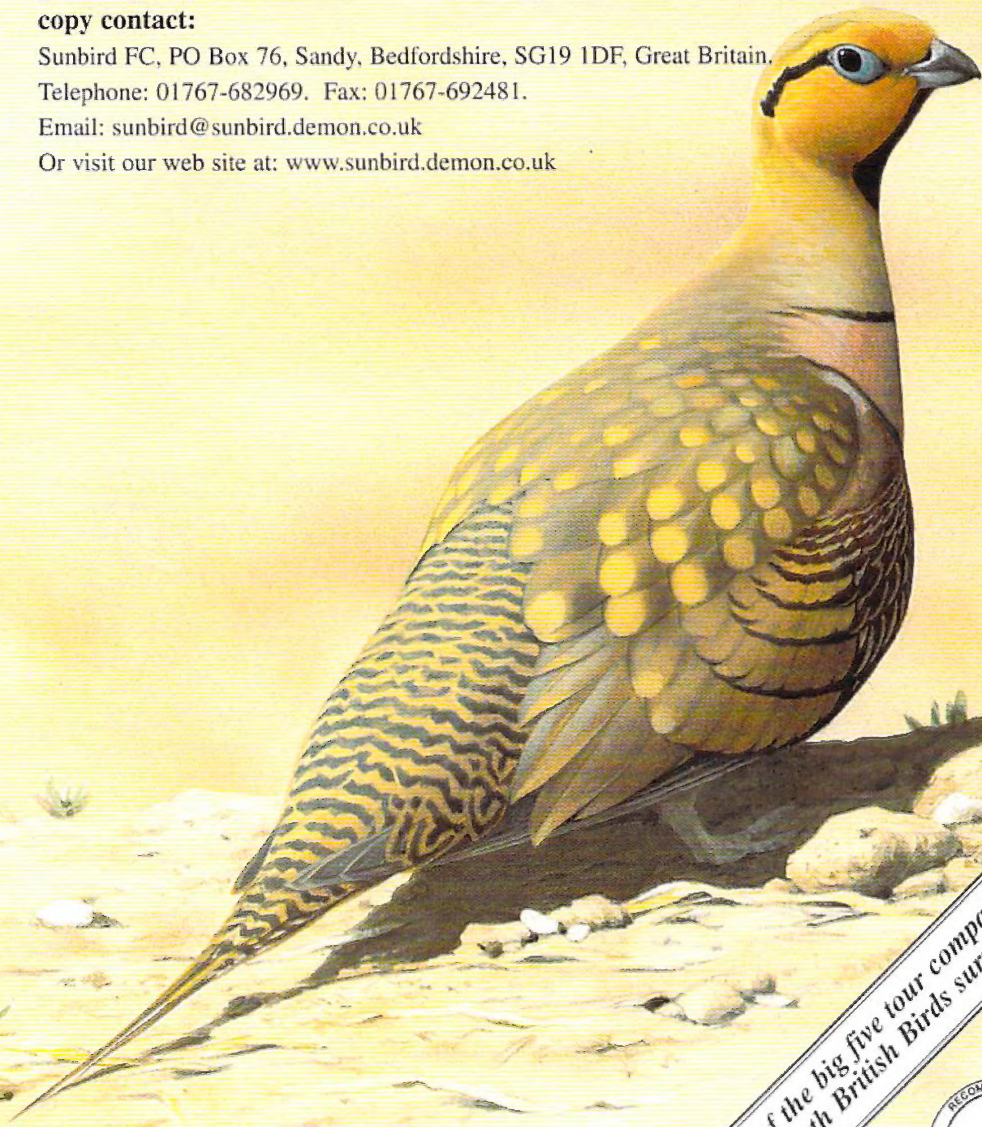
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